



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Lake Simcoe Governance: Times are a Changin'**

The Globe and Mail has dubbed Lake Simcoe “the cause du jour”. And they may be right. From political promises to big developer controversy, Lake Simcoe’s regular appearance in the news will soon merit it a section of its own in our local papers. But all of this suggests one important point: change is needed.

One major change that can be made soon is greater public participation in setting goals and priorities for the revitalization of the Lake. A new report “Towards a New Governance Model for Lake Simcoe” was submitted to the provincial government on June 30, 2007.

It was created by a Working Group comprised of farmers, anglers, members of the development industry, Ladies of the Lake, the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition, municipalities, the province, the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation, and Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA).

In the past, the Lake’s well-being has been held in the hands of an all-government partnership – the Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy (LSEMS) lead by the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

The Working Group’s 110-page report speaks to how rehabilitation and protection of Lake Simcoe should be planned and managed in the future. It strongly advises that the all-government group be replaced with a new collaborative approach that brings together the public, industry, and government at the decision-making table.

Recent announcements by both Premier Dalton McGuinty and Leader of the Opposition John Tory support the report’s principles.

“The community has come together to protect their lake, and we're here today because we're on their side,” stated Premier McGuinty at the Lake Simcoe Summit on July 6 in Barrie where he announced his support of a new Lake Simcoe Act whose development and actualization would include the Working Group’s proposed governance model.

John Tory says, “We have got to get everyone together that’s got a stake in Lake Simcoe - the municipalities, conservation authorities, the citizens - and... develop a new governance structure for the lake, working with the stakeholders.”

The Working Group's top recommendations are:

- Build on the old LSEMS with a stronger alliance of government, the public, industry, and academia as decision-making partners.
- Enhance opportunities for the public, industry, and academia to have input and decision-making power.
- Align government, industry and public efforts and activities with the needs of the Lake.
- Operate as a distinct entity with a defined structure, not just be administered (as is now) as an add-on to the activities of the LSRCA.
- Have a powerful and meaningful new name easily recognized by the public as a "Lake Simcoe Champion" promoting a shared sense of purpose and urgency.

The Working Group reviewed public opinion, analyzed other organizations, and examined both Canadian and American change models zeroing in on Lake Champlain, Chesapeake Bay, and the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan.

Concerning the results, as Annabel Slaight co-founder of the Ladies of the Lake and a founding member of the Working Group put it at the July 6th Lake Simcoe Summit, "if the recommendations are taken seriously by the government – and they **MUST** be – things here have a chance to change significantly for the better.

"An alliance of citizens, businesses, academia, and government, will help us evolve from a **THEY** should fix it scenario to a **WE** must all work together towards a better future solution," added Mrs. Slaight. "We've been waiting for government for the past 30 years; the Lake just can't afford to wait any longer."

Download report:

[www.lsems.info/whatsnew.html](http://www.lsems.info/whatsnew.html)

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