

February 19, 2025

**Via email only**

To: Jen Deck – [contact@pkndp.ca](mailto:contact@pkndp.ca)  
Lucas Graham – [info@ptbogreens.org](mailto:info@ptbogreens.org)  
Adam Hopkins – [adam4pk@gmail.com](mailto:adam4pk@gmail.com)  
Brian Martindale – [info@ontarioparty.ca](mailto:info@ontarioparty.ca)  
Andrew Roudny – [info@newblueontario.com](mailto:info@newblueontario.com)  
Dave Smith – [davesmith@davesmithptbo.com](mailto:davesmith@davesmithptbo.com)

**Re: Issues Affecting Ontario's Waterfront Communities**

The Municipality of Trent Lakes, north of Peterborough, has over fifty lakes within its geographic boundaries. Over 50% of our population are seasonal residents who have chosen this area because of the abundant lakes, rivers and forests. Over 80% of our residents are waterfront property owners.

We are writing to express our concerns about key issues affecting Ontario's waterfront communities. These matters are critical to the economic vitality, environmental health, and quality of life for countless families across the province.

Cottage owners and waterfront communities contribute significantly to Ontario's economy, supporting over 150,000 full-time equivalent jobs and generating over \$11.66 billion of Ontario's GDP. Collectively, these families own and steward 50,000 hectares of waterfront land, and 15,000 kilometres of sensitive Ontario shorelines. However, we face growing challenges that require immediate policy attention.

We urge you to prioritize the following issues and policy resolutions as part of your platform:

- 1. Municipal Downloading, Property Taxes, and Development Charges:** Municipalities face growing financial pressures due to insufficient provincial funding. Recent changes to development charges, limitations on conservation authorities, expanded municipal responsibilities, and aging infrastructure have compounded the financial burden, leading to local tax increases. We urge support for predictable and sustainable funding models to help relieve these pressures.
- 2. Forest Fire Protection:** As climate risks escalate, enhanced investment in fire prevention, detection, emergency planning, and coordinated response efforts are necessary to protect our communities and natural landscapes.
- 3. Lake Water Quality Monitoring:** Healthy lakes are vital for our environment, recreation, and tourism. Through the Lake Partner Program, the province

mobilizes over 630 citizen scientists across Ontario to monitor lake water quality in 546 lakes and rivers at 917 sites, providing an invaluable resource for management and response. This program needs to be continued and expanded to ensure our lakes continue to provide recreational and ecological benefits for years to come.

4. **Hospital Emergency Room Closures:** Timely access to emergency healthcare services in rural and waterfront areas is essential. We urge you to advocate for increased healthcare funding and staffing incentives to ensure 24/7 emergency services.
5. **Flood Management:** Many areas of the province have been affected by more frequent and severe incidents of flooding in recent years. Investment in watershed planning, monitoring technology and infrastructure is needed to ensure that our communities are prepared for a future with climate change. Support from the province is crucial, particularly for small municipalities and conservation authorities.
6. **Restoration of Public Appeal Rights:** The passage of Bill 185, the “Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024,” removed the public's right to appeal the adoption or amendment of Official Plans and Zoning By-laws. This undermines public participation and local decision-making. Restore the rights of constituents to fully participate in planning processes that impact the use and enjoyment of our lakes and rivers.
7. **Invasive Species Prevention:** The spread of invasive species poses threats to biodiversity and property values. Preventative measures are far less costly than managing infestations. Sustained funding for early detection and response programs is essential.

Ontario’s waterfront communities are a unique and valuable part of our province’s heritage, economy, and natural environment. We urge you to champion these issues on behalf of your constituents and work towards practical solutions.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters.

We support the efforts of the Federation of Ontario Cottagers’ Association to represent and advocate for waterfront communities and encourage you to consult with them to discuss these issues further or provide additional insights.

Sincerely,

Mayor and Council of the Municipality of Trent Lakes

cc: FOCA – [communications@foca.on.ca](mailto:communications@foca.on.ca)  
Peterborough County  
Peterborough County Lower Tier Municipalities