

**In Opposition to an Ethanol Facility on the Oshawa Waterfront**

I am writing this correspondence in opposition to the application for placing an ethanol facility on Oshawa's waterfront. I believe there that many serious questions that remain unanswered, the taxpayer will be on the hook for both infrastructure and environmental costs, and the technology proposed is not as "green" a form of energy as promoted.

Others Ontario municipalities have already rejected ethanol facilities including the cities of Barrie and Cornwall. A successful plant needs access to an abundance of corn which at present Oshawa's waterfront does not have. Costly efforts immediately will need to be placed in resurrecting an outdated and defunct rail line.

Farm Tech Energy's website boasts of Oshawa's port potential being comparable to cities like Barcelona, Dublin, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam. This assertion is ridiculous. In no way does this comparative take in any account the histories of these great cities as trade destinations, their proximity to the intensified European and surrounding continents, much larger populations which are in the millions versus Oshawa's 152,000, or their recognition and notoriety on the global scale. These cities are conveniently positioned on accessible deep seas with immediacy to the much deeper ocean, unlike Oshawa which is situated on an inland lake, thousands of kilometers from the Atlantic. I am sure a comparative of the shipping yard stats of these great European ports would embarrass the numbers here in Oshawa. Oshawa's port clearly cannot be compared to the great cities of the world.

Why is there a need to build this facility on our City's waterfront? Most current facilities operating in Ontario have access to rail, some to water, and some even export to the U.S. The usage of Oshawa appears simply to be for competitive and financial purposes – it is not environmentally motivated as some will have you believe. There are a number of studies that actually contradict this. Ethanol itself is also considered a hazardous material. If the environment was a consideration, there would be no need to place it in such a highly sensitive area on Lake Ontario. Imagine how many trucks, railcars, and smoke stacks will also be polluting the immediate waterfront community for the sake of an exported ethanol product. One may also wonder what upgrades our local Fire Services will need in order to be equipped to deal with this plant – taxpayers may want to know.

Many countries are currently re-evaluating their stances on ethanol citing numerous issues.

The United Nations has debated a link to environmental harm. Tapped corn supplies are identified as the source for driving up world food prices as the move to diverting fertile lands for fuel production is contributing to deforestation and world hunger.

China has altered its ethanol policies choosing food security over fuel. The Chinese have been progressively promoting the conversion of non-food products for fuel. Brazil itself has been successfully using sugarcane for years which produces much more energy than corn per unit. In Germany in particular, their position has been challenged on the grounds that many motorized vehicle components are incompatible with ethanol as it has been shown to damage tanks, hoses,

and gaskets. For those who are boat owners, there have also been several similar published reports.

Just because ethanol is a good idea, it does not necessarily mean it is a solution. Building another facility is not a solution. There are much better alternative fuel sources than corn including inedible biomass like paper pulp, wood, and switch grass. While the world is investigating second generation biomass sources from waste products, we here are looking at using an inefficient and outdated technology. Ethanol produced from corn can never completely replace gasoline and it has yet to offer a solution to the main issue which is our dependency on oil and our rate of consumption.

In my opinion, the proposed ethanol plant should be built in the same vicinity as the agricultural farms the province is handsomely assisting. The farmers that readily accept the financial subsidy and wish to see ethanol plants built should be prepared to have them in their communities. After all, that is where all the corn is. One may question as well how cost effective these plants really are if the government needs to so heavily be subsidizing them.

There are potentially significant health risks, odourous emissions, and a number of variables that are still unknown. It is hard to imagine the consequences of an explosion, leak, train derailment, or fire at an ethanol plant emphasized even more given its close proximity to the Second Marsh, McLaughlin Bay, Lake Ontario, General Motors of Canada head office, and Darlington Provincial Park. The fact that risk management strategies are needed is an admission that these facilities have a level of risk attached including an evacuation strategy that could potentially see the simultaneous shutdown of General Motors corporate headquarters, Highway 401, and the CN and CP Rail Lines impacting economies and communities far and beyond the borders of Oshawa.

In talking of local benefits, I wonder if producing ethanol here will translate into cheaper prices being reflected in local gas stations? (I highly doubt it) The facility will in fact have very few to no benefits to our immediate community - it may produce a modest permanent employment of 40 or so workers after its construction and that may be an overestimate. In comparison, the building of this plant will likely deter more desirable investment in Oshawa, limit all recreational and residential waterfront opportunities, and the safety risks presented by the ethanol plant could jeopardize any existing investments and natural landscape – all possibilities carrying much heavier consequences for Oshawa.

It is my sincere hope that this plant is built far away from our waterfront. It seems to only make sense.

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S. 14(1), *Municipal Freedom  
of Information and Protection  
of Privacy Act*