

RECEIVED JUL 26 1976



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

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O t t a w a,
July 23rd, 1976.

Miss Heather Mitchell,
Canadian Environmental Law Association,
Suite 303,
1 Spadina Crescent,
TORONTO, Ontario.
M5S 2J5

Dear Miss Mitchell:

I want to let you know that I received a copy of your letter of March 17th to Mr. Joe Clark, Leader of the Opposition, as well as a copy of Bill Jarvis' letter to you dated June 14th.

I must apologize for not contacting you before now about the Port Hope situation. But it has been rather hectic here in Ottawa over the past month, and I am only now getting the opportunity to catch up on my correspondence.

The whole question of the activities of the federal-provincial task force, relating to the environmental dangers from radioactivity, and especially removal of the radon gas hazards in the Port Hope area, certainly deserves some clarification so far as the public is concerned. My own general impression, derived from Mr. Gillespie's announcement on February 19th last, is that it was formed to co-ordinate governmental activities and standards relating to these problems, to make recommendations to both levels of government for preventing future hazards, and to clean up existing danger areas.

Assuming those are its objectives and terms of reference, then I am not so sure there should be or would be any value to having lay or public representation on the task force, as it is

primarily a group of public servants co-ordinating the work of various government agencies. However, I would expect that any resulting decisions that are eventually made, by either or both levels of government, would be communicated to the public in as open a manner as possible, and that lay organizations and members of the public would have the opportunity to discuss the decisions before some impartial body prior to any action being taken by the government.

As an example, I was rather appalled by the recent action of the Atomic Energy Control Board in extending the licence of Eldorado Nuclear Limited, so that it could temporarily continue dumping radioactive waste and other substances at its site in Port Granby. As I understand the situation, the original extended licence ran out on June 30th, and the Board somehow or other, without even meeting, was able to extend the licence for a further 9 days until there was a meeting of the Board on July 9th. At that time the Board itself then further extended the licence, this time with restricting conditions, to the end of this calendar year.

Why not
challenge
it
No

It would seem to me that the extension of the licence to July 9th was highly questionable, as it was done without a meeting of the Board. And in any event, when a regulatory agency such as the Atomic Energy Control Board is considering a matter of such concern to the community, there should be some opportunity for members of the public to intervene and make representations.

Yes

So far as the makeup of the task force is concerned, my understanding is that it is chaired by Dr. A.T. Prince, President of the A.E.C.B. The others are there as representatives of various government departments and agencies. I believe they include some well recognized environmentalists from the provincial and federal governments.

I would agree wholeheartedly that all information the task force receives or considers, particularly that from the A.E.C.B., should be available to the public. In fact, I would go further and say that any information that A.E.C.B. receives, because the board is autonomous and makes decisions and therefore

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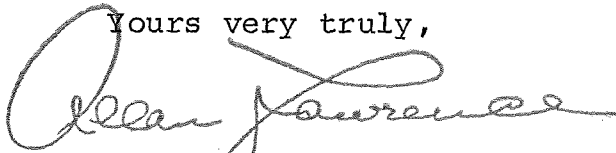
might be considered in some respects a judicial body, should also be made public. We should know the basis and rationale for decisions which affect us that are made by these regulatory and supervisory agencies.

Obviously any report from the task force itself should be made public as soon as it is completed, and I would agree with you that there should be some continuing form of public discussion in Port Hope and Port Granby or in any other area, where such decisions are made which affect the future use of these lands.

If I can provide you with further information, or assist you in securing information from any government agency, or if there is any other way in which I can help your group in matters affecting my constituents, I would be pleased to hear from you.

With very best regards, I remain,

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Allan Lawrence". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Allan Lawrence, M.P.,
Northumberland-Durham.