



Minister
Ministre

Ministry of
Environment
and Energy

Ministère de
l'Environnement
et de l'Énergie

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57441

July 22, 1997

Ms. Marilyn Churley, MPP
Riverdale
Room 215, North Wing
Legislative Building
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A5

Dear Ms. Churley:

I am writing to clarify my ministry's position with respect to your resolution regarding efforts to phase-out the use of toxic or carcinogenic chemicals in Ontario.

I appreciate the importance of your resolution, and recognize the need to address the potential and realized impacts of persistent toxic substances in our environment. This said, given the complexities of a ban or phase-out of suspected carcinogens, particularly those that are industrial by-products or pesticides, it would be incumbent upon the government to consult with all affected stakeholders before any decisions are made.

Pursuing the goals put forward by the Ontario Task Force in its March 1995 report titled *Recommendations for the Primary Prevention of Cancer* and action on your Resolution would require the involvement of various government agencies, municipalities and non-governmental organizations. Considering the scope of such an initiative and the need for consultation with participants from government, academia, industry and the public, the role of the Legislature's proposed multi-stakeholder committee cannot be stressed too strongly. Strategies for dealing with substances in question would need to be developed, along with the terms of reference clarifying the boundaries of the Committee's work.

The Task Force recommendations included integrating pollution prevention with industrial policy, adopting stringent environmental standards, and setting realistic timetables for phasing-out persistent, bioaccumulative carcinogens.

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The Ministry of Environment and Energy (MOEE) has addressed a number of the report's environmental recommendations the principles of which, I believe, are embodied by your Resolution. For example, through the Pollution Prevention Pledge Program, voluntary Memoranda of Understanding and partnerships, MOEE encourages the integration of pollution prevention into business decision-making to foster the virtual elimination of persistent or bioaccumulative carcinogens.

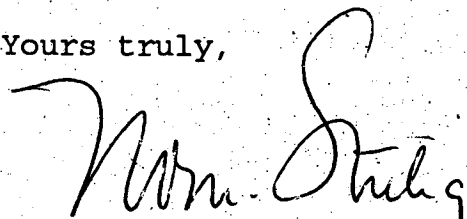
Standards for several carcinogens and possible carcinogens in air, water and drinking water will be established or revised under MOEE's Three-Plan for Standard Setting (1996-99). Further, in response to comments received through the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry, MOEE is reviewing standards for tritium. We are currently examining the joint federal report on this matter released last week by Health Canada and the Atomic Energy Control Board.

Under the *Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem (COA)*, my ministry is committed to seeking a 90 per cent reduction in the generation and release of seven high-priority persistent, bioaccumulative toxic substances by the year 2000. Indeed, in 1994, MOEE banned a number of persistent, toxic organochlorine pesticides including three that were considered to be possible human carcinogens, aldin, chlordane and chlordecone.

We have made progress, but there is clearly more work to be done. While I appreciate your request to meet with me and discuss these issues in more detail, I believe our best approach is to focus on and encourage the important work that is being undertaken by duly-appointed committees in collaboration with public, private and sectoral stakeholders.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me.

Yours truly,



Norman W. Sterling
Minister

cc: The Honourable Michael Harris
Premier

The Honourable Jim Wilson
Minister of Health

PETITION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Whereas cancer claims in excess of 20,000 lives annually in Ontario alone;

And whereas cancer treatment costs Ontario taxpayers in excess of one billion dollars annually;

And whereas the best way to fight cancer or any disease is through preventative measures;

And whereas the Ontario Task Force on the Primary Prevention of Cancer has advised the government to set realistic and realizeable targets for phasing out the release of environmental toxins;

And whereas the Legislative Assembly on April 18, 1996 passed a resolution to that effect with support from all three parties;

We, the undersigned petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows;

The Premier and the Minister of Health should immediately implement the April 18th resolution and strike a working committee to begin the task of setting realistic targets for the phase-out of persistent, bio-accumulative environmental toxins.

Name

Address, City, Postal Code

Signature

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Return petition (originals only, faxed copies are invalid) to Marilyn Churley, MPP
Room 213 NW, Legislative Building Queen's Park Toronto M7A 1A5