

THE USE OF METROPOLITAN TORONTO FUNDING BY
THE CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ASSOCIATION
IN 1980 - 1981

The funding the Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) has received since 1975 from Metro Toronto has been used to supplement its sustaining grant from the Ontario Legal Aid Plan (OLAP). CELA's OLAP grant may be used only for activities which are directly related to the maintenance of its environmental law clinic which provides free legal advice and representation.

The Board of Directors of CELA has always had objectives outside the Legal Aid Plan's perimeters which they have felt are essential CELA activities. Your Metro grants have allowed CELA to carry out such projects in the fields of ① law reform and ② public education and to build a ③ library resource centre.

The following is an account of how we have used your funding in 1980-1981.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

The CELA Newsletter, published by-monthly, details the activities of the Association and other environmental developments that are of interest to a broad range of the public. It is received by all our membership. Although we are endeavoring to make this publication self-sustaining, we have not been totally able to do this. The grant from Metro has enabled us to publish the one issue a year not covered by the subscription membership fee. It has ensured that we have not had to raise our membership rate above the affordable rate of \$10.00.

CELA sponsored a forum this year for the public on "Low-Level Radiation - How Safe is Safe?" at Harbourfront. It was

moderated by David Suzuki and involved representatives from Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., the Atomic Energy Control Board and nuclear critics, Norm Rubin and Dr. Ernest Sternglass. It was attended by a capacity crowd of 680 people and was the first public forum which brought together both sides of the question to exchange their concerns. Metro funds helped pay the costs of this event.

CELA is co-sponsoring a series of forums in March on Ecotoxicity at the St. Lawrence Town Hall. These three programs will draw together the chemical industry, government regulators, labour, the medical profession, environmentalists, journalists and the public in a dialogue on the prevalence, effects and control of chemicals in our society. CELA has used Metro funds to help publicize this series.

LAW REFORM

Metro funds have allowed CELA to be instrumental in the formation of a Canadian Coalition on Acid Rain. It continues to enable CELA to offer legal advice and research to other public interest and conservation groups not considered as clients. CCAR

The Association has submitted numerous briefs and made appearances before committees. Those of particular relevance to Metropolitan Toronto are:

1. a brief to the Ministry of Housing - March 1980 on the Planning Act (Ontario Draft Bill);
2. a brief to the Standing Committee on Resource Development - August 1979 on The Environmental Protection Act 1978, Bill 24 Spill Amendments;
3. a minority report to the Task Force on the burning of PCB's in Cement Kilns;
4. a brief to the Federal Provincial Task Force on the Definition of Hazardous Waste;
5. a brief submitted to the House of Commons on the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act;
6. a brief submitted to the Royal Commission on the Health and Safety aspects of Asbestos Use (Ontario);

7. a brief to the Grange Commission on the Mississauga train disaster.

In order to assist in finding solutions to the chemical dilemma, the Canadian Environmental Law Research Foundation and CELA have developed a project entitled "The Toxic Law Project". In the first project of this series, a round-table on toxic substances will take place in Toronto in June and will be followed by one on hazardous waste in September and on pesticides in December. Metro funding helped in the formation and implementation of this project.

LIBRARY AND RESOURCE CENTRE

This year CELA moved from two cramped rooms donated by the University of Toronto to spacious quarters at 8 York Street sponsored by the Ministry of the Attorney General. For the first time, our staff of ten has been able to accommodate visits from the general public and students who wish to conduct their own research on environmental matters.

Furthermore, for the first time, we have a room to house our library of currently about 1,000 volumes. We have used a portion of the Metro grant for shelving and a work table for this facility.

In addition to the activities listed above, CELA lawyers and support staff have responded to numerous information requests and have spoken to many high school and university classes throughout Metro. Casework they have handled within Metro has included:

- representing citizens concerned with an attempt to change the residential character of their neighbourhood;
- representing citizens concerned with the effects of dredging on Metropolitan Toronto water quality;
- numerous pesticide cases in Metro.

PROPOSED USE OF METROPOLITAN TORONTO FUNDING
IN 1981 - 1982

During 1981-1982, CELA proposed using Metro funds within the same categories that they were used in 1980-1981. Continued help is needed to defray costs of ongoing law reform, writing of briefs and submissions and to conduct the two round-tables on hazardous waste and pesticides mentioned above.

Public forums will be continued on issues of environmental concern to the public. One project we hope to do in the fall is a series of lectures to be given by experts on nuclear power. This is an attempt to demystify the process and technology for lay people and public interest groups who have to address complex nuclear issues. CELA staff are anxious to improve their own understanding so that they can respond more effectively to citizen queries. The Consumer's Association and The Health Advocacy Unit have expressed interest in co-sponsoring these workshops.

Now that we have the space to house our library, we would like to develop it as the only environmental law library open to the public in Metro. It would be a valuable resource to students, teachers, planners, citizen's groups, politicians, and municipal officials.

Because Legal Aid limits funding for texts to mainly general law books, we are sadly lacking in books on the environment. This affects the quality of service CELA provides. Time is wasted searching in other libraries for essential texts. We have attached a list of books we feel are minimally necessary to begin to build a comprehensive library. We also need to hire a professional librarian to spend some time organizing the library so that information is easily retrievable by the general public. CELA would like to use Metro funds to do this during the summer.

Another overall goal of the Association is to heighten its profile so that people become more aware of our services which are unique in Canada. We have done a mailing this year to all media in Canada, but need to continue to reach target groups. To this end, we are also considering doing a general pamphlet on citizen's environmental rights for distribution in municipal clerks' offices, libraries and other public places.

These are our areas of priority for the next year and they will be severely curtailed or eliminated without your continued support. More details on our proposed activities are available upon request from Sarah Miller, Office Manager (CELA).