



Summer Student Profiles

CELA has been working to advance environmental justice for over fifty years.

Building on this history, CELA mentors and supports the next generation of environmental lawyers and advocates.

This summer, CELA welcomed an excellent group of students. They supported our legal team by researching and assisting on summary legal advice to clients navigating environmental justice concerns. The students also researched and prepared briefs, memos, and reports to help with CELA's law reform and public legal education.

Along the way, they learned about environmental justice issues and brought new and valuable perspectives to CELA's work. Here's a rundown of who they are and what they worked on this summer. We wish them the best of luck in the future!

Caleb Broeker - Caleb is entering his second year of law school at the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, where he works at the law library during the year. Over the summer, he collaborated with experts and conducted case law research regarding nuclear legislation, and produced numerous reports on access to information. He is also President of the Lakehead Dungeons and Dragons Club, at the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law.

Hannah Chan - Hannah is entering her second year of law school at the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University, where she will be completing coursework towards an environmental law certificate. She joined CELA through the Schulich Academic Excellence Fund for Internships. This summer, Hannah researched the environmental footprint of artificial intelligence data centres for a CELA report, which is to be released soon. She was also involved in research for a public legal education event held for the residents of St. Catharines regarding a contaminated site in the city, and following this presentation she had the opportunity to work on multiple summary advice files. Finally, she contributed research and writing to a submission CELA made regarding a nuclear plant refurbishment project in Pickering.

Nicola Duyker - Nicola is entering her second year at Peter A. Allard Law School at the University of British Columbia. Nicola assisted with research for a range of projects, producing memos on topics like the legal frameworks affecting the Oak Ridges Moraine, the management of PFAS by government departments, and the doctrine of public trust. To support her research, she managed a number of Freedom of Information requests made to all levels of government. For a project concerning the migration of contamination off-site, Nicola distilled dense technical documents, drafted a response to an Environmental Registry of Ontario proposal, and assisted with a letter representing community concerns to industry stakeholders. She also created a fact sheet on the *Impact Assessment Act*. Nicola is thankful to the Dean's Public Interest Fellowship for making her time at CELA possible, the experience has been incredibly meaningful and educational.

Gachi Issa - Gachi is entering her third year at the Lincoln Alexander School of Law and plans to specialize in environmental, natural resources, and Aboriginal law. During her time with CELA, Gachi collaborated on a Building Emissions and Performance Standards project with the Low-Income Energy Network, researched approaches to cumulative effects assessment for air pollution, and wrote a blog calling on Toronto City Council to deliver on its promise of a maximum heat by-law.

Priyanka Persaud - Priyanka is in her third year of law school at the Lincoln Alexander School of Law. This summer, Priyanka was at CELA through the "Debwewin First Nations Jury Review" placement, facilitated by the Ministry Attorney General Indigenous Justice Division for LASL's Integrated Practice Curriculum. Priyanka researched First Nations drinking water legislation, and

conducted comparative legal research to inform a legal brief about the newly introduced Bill C-37. She also drafted a legal memo about developments in Canadian jurisprudence recognizing the Indigenous concept of “rights of nature” and wrote a blog post about a recent Federal Court of Appeal decision that made a significant environmental ruling for species at risk protection.

Taylor Thiele - Taylor was a summer intern at CELA for 2026. He will be starting his 2nd year at Western Law in the Fall. Before entering law school, Taylor completed a Master of Public Health, specializing in Environmental Health, at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto.

Taylor has a deep interest in environmental law, the energy transition, and climate adaptation. His CELA internship this summer focused on source water supply and protection in Southern Ontario.

Berra Yilmaz - Berra is entering her final year at Osgoode Hall Law School. During her time at CELA, Berra supported a Human Rights complaint; her work involved collaborating with experts and conducting case law research. She also prepared several legal documents, including a legal memorandum focused on nuclear emergency planning and a comprehensive report tracking and breaking down over 40 bills related to public participation. Berra also spent the summer advocating on the issue of extreme heat by authoring accessible public materials such as media releases and joint statements. Building on this advocacy, her most recent law reform initiative involved penning a submission to a provincial ministry regarding the health of migrant agricultural workers during extreme heat, followed by stakeholder coordination to advance the initiative.

Stephanie Yeung - Stephanie is completing her Master of Public Health at McMaster University. She joined the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment (CPCHE) as a summer practicum student through CELA, mainly supporting RentSafe projects. During her practicum, she contributed to research and knowledge mobilization activities related to climate resilience in low-income rental housing, including a regional scan and analysis of policies, plans, and programs. She also contributed to the development and review of resources on climate-related risks, including extreme heat, mould, and air quality, which will help inform the intersectoral roundtable, collective call to action, and toolkit development. Following her practicum, Stephanie will continue working with CPCHE and CELA as a part-time practicum student in the fall, where she looks forward to supporting ongoing work on rental housing, environmental health, and climate resilience.

Casework

Burying Nuclear Waste: CELA represents the "We the Nuclear Free North" (WTNFN) coalition in relation to the proposed Deep Geological Repository in northwestern Ontario for the transportation and underground placement of high-level radioactive waste. WTNFN recently submitted a comment to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada in response to the Nuclear Waste Management Organization's (NWMO) comments on the draft integrated tailored impact statement guidelines (guidelines). WTNFN expressed serious concerns about the proposal to limit the impact assessment review of this unprecedented and dangerous project. The Agency then posted a notice of commencement of the impact assessment process and issued the guidelines to provide direction to the NWMO for preparation of its impact statement.

Neighbours of a Nuclear Plant: CELA, on behalf of Durham Nuclear Awareness and Slovenian Home Association, recently submitted comments about Ontario Power Generation's application to refurbish the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station, as well as renewing licences for the station and

waste management facility. CELA continues to believe the population density around the Pickering plant is far too high for the continued operation of a nuclear power plant, and has a number of safety concerns relating to alerting and evacuation should an accident at the plant occur. CELA recommends that the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission deny the requests.

Law Reform

Addressing Environmental Racism: The *National Strategy Respecting Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice Act* passed in June 2024, and calls for developing a national strategy and a study to address environmental justice and environmental racism in Canada by 2026. Canadian environmental and health organizations prepared a joint submission in response to the draft released this summer. While the organizations recognize that the draft Strategy marks an important step, they continue to call for an approach that utilizes the government's authority to act on environmental injustices beyond traditionally conceived environmental hazards or polluting industries. This approach should consider cumulative impacts, pollution, and the impacts of climate change and other ongoing burdens.

Federal Discussion Papers: In early May, the federal government released three discussion papers.

- 1) CELA responded to the **Getting Major Projects Built in Canada** proposal and raised numerous concerns about the proposed reform of federal assessment and permitting regimes to fast-track major projects.
- 2) CELA also commented on the **Strengthening One Canadian Economy** paper, focusing on the need for a broader focus on transportation that prioritizes the needs of rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.
- 3) CELA welcomed the **National Electricity Strategy** as a commitment to developing a nationally coordinated electricity strategy capable of supporting Canada's transition to a net-zero economy. At the same time, Canada's

electricity transition must be designed to deliver benefits that are broadly shared and recognize that affordability, equity, and environmental protection are not secondary considerations but fundamental objectives that must guide implementation.

Resources

Webinar and Resources: New pathway to protecting drinking water for non-municipal systems

Some non-municipal drinking water systems may be eligible to receive the same source water protections that many of Ontario's municipalities already have.

On Wednesday, September 23 at 11:00am ET, CELA will be hosting a webinar about what steps some groups of well owners or small drinking water systems can take to pursue having their private well or surface water intake included in your local source protection plan. This event will be of interest to people who rely on non-municipal drinking water, environmental advocacy groups, and others who want to learn more about expanding source water protections in Ontario.

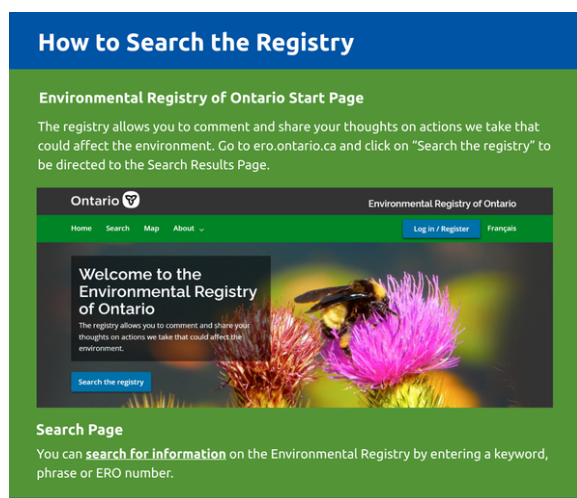
[Learn more and register here.](#)

CELA has also produced a new [fact sheet](#) and [briefing note](#) that outline which non-municipal systems may be eligible for inclusion in a source protection plan and what steps you can take to protect your drinking water source from contamination or depletion.

Webinar Recording: Protecting Water – Pathways to Drinking Water Protection in First Nations Communities:

Access to clean drinking water begins long before it reaches the tap – it starts with protecting the sources that communities depend on.

Co-hosted with Chiefs of Ontario, this webinar explores the full range of legal tools available to protect drinking water sources in First Nations communities, from provincial and federal frameworks to band council resolutions. A key focus of this session will be the federal drinking water protection legislation introduced last year but never passed. We will look at what that bill would mean for First Nations communities, particularly its provisions around protecting drinking water sources. [Click here to watch the recording.](#)



New Resources! With the help of our summer law students, CELA is pleased to share two new educational resources.

First is a [fact sheet about the Environmental Registry of Ontario](#), the provincial government's platform for public notice about environmental decisions, including a guide on how to navigate their website. Second is a [guidance document explaining Ontario's permit-to-take-water system](#).

Healthy Environments for Learning Day (HELD): HELD 2026 featured a call to action for healthy, sustainable, and climate-resilient outdoor learning and play settings for all children in Canada. If you missed the HELD Speaker Series in June, you can access the recordings on the [HELD website](#). HELD also shares a new [report from the Lawson Foundation](#) that features an environmental scan of outdoor and land-based early learning in Canada.

The Eight-Minute Environmental Lawyer 2026: Co-chaired by CELA Counsel Ramani Nadarajah and John Georgakopoulos of Willms & Shier Environmental Lawyers LLP, this program delivers a fast-paced and engaging half-day session built around to-the-point presentations on developments in environmental law. Designed for busy practitioners, each segment distills

complex issues into practical insights that you need to stay current. Explore emerging trends, key cases, and regulatory changes shaping the landscape of environmental law. This session also features a fireside chat with a Superior Court of Justice judge, giving you a rare and candid perspective into environmental law from the bench. Learn more and [register here](#).

Do you have an environmental law issue you need help with? Know someone else who does? Learn more about [how CELA can help](#).

Need Legal Services?

If you have an environmental justice issue, we may be able to help.

We provide free, confidential legal help to people living on low income as well as vulnerable, under-resourced or Indigenous communities.

We also provide environmental justice legal advice to individuals and groups regardless of income.

Complete an online intake form, call our office at 416-960-2284 or 1-844-755-1420 ext 7216, or email us at articling@cela.ca.

[Click here to complete an intake form](#)

Support Our Work

The [Canadian Environmental Law Foundation](#) raises funds to support environmental research, education, and access-to-justice initiatives.

In addition, the Foundation works to preserve and make accessible the history of environmental law in Canada so that future generations can learn from the past. This includes our digital and physical library and archival holdings.

Your gift today will help mentor the next generation of environmental lawyers and sustain the research and education needed to ensure environmental law continues to evolve.

Support Our Work

From the Foundation

August Feature: This month's feature from the Canadian Environmental Law Archive is a 1987 report by CELA researcher Kathy Cooper titled "Lead and Public Health: Risk Reducing Lifestyle Choices". Prepared for the Ontario Public Health Association annual meeting, the report outlines well-known risks from lead exposure and the need for regulatory changes and lifestyle changes to reduce exposure.

Forward to a Friend

Copyright (C) 2026 Canadian Environmental Law Association and Canadian Environmental Law Foundation. All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)