



INTERVENOR

*Dedicated to environmental equity, justice,
health for over 50 years*

Pickering Reactors Shut Down

This month marks a moment many in Durham Region and Toronto have been waiting on for decades. By the end of September, the last operating reactors at the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station will have shut down. For the first time since 1971, no nuclear power is being generated in one of the most densely populated communities in Canada.

For CELA, and longtime clients Durham Nuclear Awareness and Slovenian Home Association, this is a milestone worth noting. Together, we have argued for years that a nuclear station does not belong in a place where millions of people live, work and raise their families.

However, in the same week that the reactors shut down, the province also announced the start of site construction to refurbish four of Pickering's units, a project that could keep the station running for decades. This announcement is premature given that the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) has not yet decided whether to approve that refurbishment or renew the station's licence. The second part of the CNSC's licensing hearing takes place October 6-9. CELA and Durham Nuclear Awareness will present at the hearing; our [submissions](#) can be found on our website.

Casework

Win for Water Protection near Napanee: For the past three decades, CELA has represented a residents' group near Napanee, Ontario, which is concerned about how an existing landfill, and a plan to expand it, could adversely affect local water resources. Since 2022, CELA has filed several legal and technical submissions opposing a controversial proposal by the landfill operator to install a Hydraulic Control System. This system proposed to direct contaminated groundwater generated by the landfill into a stormwater pond on the site, which, according to the group's hydrogeologist, raised serious risks for the surrounding environment. Last month, the operator withdrew its application for the proposed system, according to an update on the Environmental Registry of Ontario. CELA is pleased with this outcome and will continue to support local residents in protecting surface water and groundwater.

Extreme Heat in Federal Prisons: CELA is co-counsel with the Queen's Prison Law Clinic (QPLC) in a case before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal brought by the John Howard Society of Canada about extreme heat in Canada's federal prisons. Federal prisoners don't have air conditioning where they live and sleep. During extreme heat, which is becoming more and more frequent because of climate change, cell temperatures can stay dangerously high for days. That heat is especially dangerous for older prisoners, people with disabilities or chronic illnesses, and people taking medications that affect how the body regulates temperature. Safe indoor temperatures in a prisoner's cell are a basic condition for health. The people with the least control over their surroundings shouldn't be put at risk.

Law Reform

First Nations Clean Water Act: CELA has released its analysis of Bill C-37, the First Nations Clean Water Act, with a focus on source water protection.

CELA has long advocated for this legislation and urges its swift passage, with key amendments to strengthen source water protection and the right of every individual on First Nations lands to clean, safe drinking water. The federal must make these changes, listen to First Nations, and prioritize the passage of this Bill.

Missing Maximum Temperature By-Law Report in Hamilton: CELA and other organizations are concerned about further delays in Hamilton in bringing forward an adequate temperature by-law. The motion to study a by-law was passed unanimously in 2023. Tenants have since been put at risk for four summers and are now being faced with further delay. CELA urges the Hamilton City Council to consider an adequate temperature by-law at its Council meeting next week and pass it without further delay.

Framework for New Data Centres: CELA and the Low-Income Energy Network (LIEN) recently submitted comments on Ontario's proposed Economic and Strategic Assessment Framework for New Data Centres and the associated Data Centre Playbook. CELA and LIEN recommend that the framework protect consumers – particularly low-income consumers – from increased electricity costs, consider cumulative environmental impacts, establish clear siting criteria, and ensure transparency and meaningful public participation.

Lead in Drinking Water: As back-to-school gets underway, CELA recommends that parents and caregivers take steps to help protect kids from being exposed to lead in their drinking water. [Read our recent blog to learn more.](#)

Changes to Public Lands Act: CELA recently submitted comments on Ontario's proposed changes to streamline approvals and modernize enforcement and compliance under the *Public Lands Act*. CELA recommends releasing the proposed legislative wording for public review, clearly defining new offences and enforcement powers, protecting lawful access to and use of public lands, and providing further information on environmental impacts, closed-road access, compliance and rehabilitation requirements.

Changes to Crown Forest Sustainability Act: CELA recently submitted comments on Ontario's proposed changes to streamline approvals for removing trees from public lands for non-forestry activities under the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act*. CELA recommends maintaining effective government

oversight, setting clear limits and risk-based criteria for permit-by-rule activities, tracking cumulative forest loss and fragmentation, ensuring meaningful Indigenous consultation, and establishing public notice and participation requirements.

Resources

Environmental Compliance Approvals, Explained: CELA has released [new guidance](#) explaining environmental compliance approvals (ECA). An ECA is a permit from the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks that governs air, noise, waste and sewage pollution from industrial facilities.

On the Road - Gatherings and Presentations: This summer and fall, CELA staff had the privilege of joining two important gatherings: Anishinabek Nation Water Consortium, hosted in Aamjiwnaang First Nation in July, and the Chiefs of Ontario Great Lakes Gathering in Huntsville in September. We also presented to staff at the Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic about the environmental impacts of AI and data centres.

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

September Feature: This month, instead of highlighting a single document, we're happy to announce that we've added more than 900 new documents to the Canadian Environmental Law Archive. The new additions include a [1978 speech](#) to the Canadian Labour Congress Conference on legislative jurisdiction in environmental law by Ernest D. Boyden, and a [1984 presentation](#) by CELA Counsel Toby Vigod on the control of toxic chemicals. Explore the full collection on the [Archive website](#).

Forward to a Friend

Intervenor, Volume 54, No. 4
September 2026

[View this email in your browser](#)



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](#)