



## Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, Inc.

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ALL MANIOTBA M.P. s  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada  
K1A 0A6

Dear (insert MP name)

### RE : EXPERIMENTAL LAKES AREA

The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba (PCWM) would like to make you aware of the serious concerns we have regarding the decision to stop funding the Experimental Lakes Area (ELA) research.

We are attaching the letter that has been sent by the President of the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, which states the unanimous decision that was made at the recent Annual Meeting to bring these objections to his attention.

It is indeed, a very short sighted decision, and along with the decreased funding and support for environmental research by the Federal Government, will reduce Canada's role at a crucial time for the global community. To save less than \$3 million annually, the Fisheries and Oceans Department is shutting down the only place in the world where whole-ecosystem research is conducted on freshwater fish and fish habitat.

The tremendous value of the ELA facility lies in the ability of scientists to conduct whole-ecosystem manipulation experiments. These studies have provided sound scientific knowledge for the development of environmental policies both nationally and internationally. The key areas of influence have been in understanding and managing algal blooms, acid rain, climate change, aquaculture, mercury pollution, greenhouse gas production, hydroelectric reservoir development, and endocrine-disrupting chemicals. Research at the ELA has demonstrated that smaller scale experiments cannot provide reliable information for managing whole lakes. Thus by shutting down this facility, scientists in government, industry, and academia will be unable to conduct the research required to formulate sound environmental policies. The scientific output of Canada's ELA has been impressive to say the least – it has produced 745 peer-reviewed scientific articles, 126 graduate theses, 102 book chapters and synthesis papers, 185 data reports, and several books. ELA scientists have been the recipients of numerous prestigious international water awards, including the Stockholm Water Prize, the International Tyler Prize for Environmental Science and the Gerhard Herzberg Gold Medal for Science and Engineering. **The ELA has also received outstanding reviews by Canada's Auditor General's office, and the Government has invested approximately \$4 million in new infrastructure over the last 10 years.**

Honourary Patroness, Her Honour Anita K. Lee  
In Federation with the National Council of Women of Canada [www.ncwc.ca](http://www.ncwc.ca)  
<http://www.pcwmanitoba.ca>

According to the Winnipeg Free Press, in 2009, with a recession beating down on Canada, the federal government approved \$1 million for the renowned Experimental Lakes Area research station to build a new lab. The lab, part of Canada's "economic action plan," has had one season of use. **The budget-cutting decision is short-sighted and will cost us dearly in the future** . It will end a spectacular run of groundbreaking science that held real-world payback, starting with celebrated findings such as that acid rain -- sulfuric acid -- was killing fish at lower concentrations than believed, and that phosphorus is the real culprit behind eutrophication of lakes receiving the discharge from man-made sources. Out of the work on a collection of lakes near Kenora, ELA scientists and research staff are now adding to the body of evidence on the risk of endocrine disrupters. Artificial estrogen, making its way into our waterways and lakes, has been proven capable of decimating fish populations by feminizing male fish. Recently, experiments in the ELA led to proof that brominated flame retardants, widely used in clothing, upholstery, cars, textiles and electronics, disrupt the thyroid function in fish, which interferes with growth and development. That fed into the more recent decision by the UN's Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants to list the toxic chemical for elimination from industrial production. Flame retardants are now being suspected as playing a role in obesity.

According to the Winnipeg Free Press, Fisheries Minister Keith Ashfield's decision puts a number of new experiments on the chopping block. The department is shutting down its national centre for pesticide research, which feeds evidence for regulation of pesticide use to Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency. This is a perplexing decision, as the research, conducted across Canada, was funded by Health Canada and there is no other federal government body doing such investigations.

The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba would also like to highlight the key role that the ELA plays with the research and University communities. Many of the budding scientists who have started their studies at the ELA have gone on to other positions, in the academic, public and private spheres.

PCWM represents over 30 federate members or organizations, and many individual members. We are a volunteer, not for profit organization, established in 1949, to work together to improve the quality of life for women, families, and society. We are a federate member of the National Council of Women of Canada, which was established in 1893.

Please keep us advised as to your position, and your efforts to have the vital work of the ELA continue.

Sincerely,

Sharon Taylor  
President

attachment

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