



VIA E-Mail

August 8, 2019

DISTRIBUTION

Re: Thunder Bay Area of Concern - Status of Fish Tumours or Other Deformities Beneficial Use Impairment

As Annex 4 (Areas of Concern Annex) leads for the Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health, Dan and I support the "not impaired" designation, and congratulate the Thunder Bay RAP Team, Public Advisory Committee and local community for attaining this important environmental milestone.

We base our concurrence on the following information. When Thunder Bay was identified as an Area of Concern in 1987, discharges of pollutants from local industry, municipal wastewater and urban runoff had impaired water quality and ecosystem health. In the early 1990s, sampling within Thunder Bay revealed elevated fish tumour rates, with 7.1% of white suckers (*Catostomus commersoni*) having liver tumours. Experts believe there is a state of impairment when the prevalence of liver tumours is greater than 5%.

Fish Tumours or Other Deformities was identified as "impaired" in the Stage 1 Remedial Action Plan (RAP) report (1991) and subsequent Stage 2 RAP report (2004). It was changed to "requires further assessment" in 2012 based on positive improvements achieved through several actions, including upgrades to municipal and industrial wastewater treatment and remediation of contaminated sediment at the former Northern Wood Preservers property.

Environment and Climate Change Canada undertook assessments in 2007 and 2013 to determine the prevalence of fish tumours following these and other remedial actions. In 2007, the tumour rates within sampled white suckers was down to 2%, and in 2013 it was 1%. The results of these studies demonstrate that there are no fish tumours or other deformities problem in the Thunder Bay Area of Concern, as detailed within the attached technical report, *Thunder Bay Area of Concern Beneficial Use Impairment Assessment Report: Fish Tumours or Other Deformities*.

The assessment report underwent a thorough review by the RAP Team, the Public Advisory Committee, the RAP Implementation Committee, Fort William First Nation, Métis Nation of Ontario, and Red Sky Métis Independent Nation. A significant public engagement program was also undertaken, and there were no objections to the assessment or recommended change in status to a "not impaired" status.

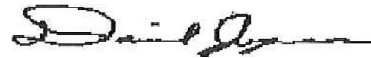
As Annex 4 (Areas of Concern Annex) leads for the Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health, we support the "not impaired" designation, and congratulate the Thunder Bay RAP Team, Public Advisory Committee and local community for attaining this important environmental milestone. We look forward to continued progress toward our shared goal of delisting the Thunder Bay Area of Concern.



Sincerely,



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A/Manager, Great Lakes Areas of Concern
Environment and Climate Change Canada



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