

**Ministry of the Environment  
and Climate Change**

Environmental Approvals  
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**Ministère de l'Environnement et de  
l'Action en matière de changement  
climatique**

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March 18, 2016

Bryan Smith  
Oxford Coalition for Social Justice  
bryasmit@oxford.net

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am writing to you today regarding Walker Environmental Group's (Walker) proposed Terms of Reference for the Southwestern Landfill. Oxford Coalition for Social Justice has been involved in the environmental assessment process for this project, and I would like to thank you for your participation.

I wish to inform you that after undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the Terms of Reference and carefully considering comments received, The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change (the Minister) has approved the Terms of Reference with a number of amendments. The Minister is satisfied that an environmental assessment prepared in accordance with the amended Terms of Reference will be consistent with the purpose of the Environmental Assessment Act and the public interest. The attached Notice of Approval sets out the amendments in detail, for your information.

In making a decision on this Terms of Reference, the Minister carefully considered the issues that were raised by the public, stakeholder groups including Oxford Coalition for Social Justice, Aboriginal communities, municipalities, and government reviewers, along with a detailed technical review by ministry staff.

The Minister closely considered the concerns you have raised and determined that a number of amendments to the Terms of Reference are necessary.

This Terms of Reference provides Walker with a work plan that it must follow to complete its detailed environmental studies, and it will be required to identify and evaluate any potential environmental impacts, in consultation with the public, Aboriginal communities, interested stakeholders, municipalities and government reviewers, before the Minister makes a decision on the proposed undertaking.

The Terms of Reference has been amended to make it clear that Walker must be able to show that the proposed site, and all potential environmental impacts of the proposed undertaking are clearly understood. This information will be required before the ministry will be able to make a determination about whether the proposed undertaking would be consistent with the purpose of the Environmental Assessment Act, in particular the protection, conservation and wise management of the environment.

The Minister has also amended the Terms of Reference to require Walker to consult with the ministry's technical reviewers as well as the public, Aboriginal communities, interested stakeholders, municipalities and government reviewers as it plans its detailed technical studies.

The requirement to consult as Walker plans its detailed technical studies will provide the Oxford Coalition for Social Justice with an opportunity to provide early input on specific areas of concern with the proposal before studies are completed. This could include providing input to Walker on the concerns that Oxford Coalition for Social Justice has related to the work plans outlined in the Terms of Reference. Walker will be held to the highest environmental standards in the work that is completed.

The ministry is satisfied that the public and stakeholder groups were provided sufficient opportunity to participate in the development of the Terms of Reference. Based on the Record of Consultation, Walker provided a variety of methods to provide input on the project, including hosting open houses, workshops, letter mailings, media releases, a project web site, newsletters, and maintaining a local office in Ingersoll. In addition, the consultation plan identified in the amended Terms of Reference will provide opportunities for further consultation during the preparation of the environmental assessment.

In completing this environmental assessment, Walker must not only demonstrate that it can clearly understand any potential impacts, but it must also demonstrate that the advantages of its proposal outweigh the disadvantages. The ministry will ensure that any decision on the final environmental assessment supports the betterment of the people of Ontario through the conservation, protection and wise management of the environment.

The approval of the amended Terms of Reference does not amount to an approval of the project. With the amended Terms of Reference now approved, the purpose of the next step in the environmental assessment process is to allow Walker the opportunity to evaluate the environmental effects of its proposal and confirm if the project is feasible. Walker will be responsible for demonstrating that it can clearly understand any potential effects, and it must complete sufficient studies to show this.

The ministry has determined that the Terms of Reference as amended provides an appropriate framework for assessing the full range of direct and indirect environmental effects of the proposed undertaking and that an environmental assessment prepared in accordance with the Terms of Reference will provide a comprehensive, transparent planning process that will address the sensitivity of the site and potential environmental effects. Furthermore, the amended Terms of Reference includes a commitment to assess the combined effects of all components of the project through a cumulative effects assessment for the undertaking that will consider other existing and planned projects in the area.

You will be provided opportunities to review and comment on the results of any detailed technical studies conducted as part of the environmental assessment. The ministry encourages you to consider taking advantage of any opportunities to participate in the process. Your concerns will be taken into consideration by the ministry prior to a decision being made on the project.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to the attention of the ministry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrew Evers".

Andrew Evers  
Special Project Officer

Attachment(s)