
JOINT STATEMENT BY THE TABLE DE CONCERTATION DES ÉLUS DU LAC MEMPHRÉMAGOG ON THE COVENTRY FILE

The Table de concertation des élus du lac Memphrémagog is made up of political representatives from the City of Sherbrooke, the MRC of Memphrémagog, the provincial ridings of Orford and Sherbrooke, as well as the federal ridings of Compton-Stanstead, Sherbrooke and Brome-Missisquoi. The objectives of this committee are to develop a regional force for the protection of the lake, as well as synergy between the different levels of government for concerted interventions.

WHEREAS Lake Memphremagog is a key part of the cultural identity of the Eastern Townships and a natural gem, shared between Canada and the United States which plays a fundamental environmental, cultural, economic and social role for the riverside communities and the region as a whole;

WHEREAS the municipalities of Sherbrooke, Magog, Potton and Saint-Benoît-du-Lac obtain their public drinking water from Lake Memphremagog which represents more than 200,000 people, and that the municipalities of Austin, the Township of Stanstead and Ogden are located in its immediate vicinity;

WHEREAS the only landfill site in the State of Vermont is located at the head of Lake Memphremagog in the city of Coventry, and the lake flows from south to north from the United States to Canada;

WHEREAS Article IV of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 states: *"It is further agreed that the waters herein defined as boundary waters and waters flowing across the boundary shall not be polluted on either side to the injury of health or property on the other."*

WHEREAS this landfill generates significant quantities of leachate, containing perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl compounds (PFAS or eternal pollutants) and other toxic pollutants;

WHEREAS the MRC of Memphrémagog and the cities of Magog and Sherbrooke formally opposed, as early as 2004, the treatment of leachate from the Coventry landfill at the Newport municipal wastewater treatment plant;

WHEREAS this objection led to a prohibition relating to the treatment of leachate at the Newport Wastewater Treatment Plant for the period 2004 to 2009;

WHEREAS the discharge of leachate, treated or not, into the Lake Memphremagog watershed has been prohibited again since July 23, 2019, after the sustained involvement of a group of stakeholders, which includes municipal and government agencies, but also interest groups, including Memphremagog Conservation (MCI) and Don't Undermine Memphremagog's Purity (DUMP);

WHEREAS in 2020, a committee integrating regionally elected officials from the 3 levels of government was created to share expertise and coordinate the political pathways to be taken on this file as well as to speak with one voice to increase the reach of the positions adopted;

WHEREAS the National Assembly of Quebec unanimously adopted, on June 3, 2021, a motion calling for a permanent ban on the discharge of leachate into the Lake Memphremagog watershed;

WHEREAS the leachate could be treated and discharged back into Lake Memphremagog watershed at the expiry of pre-treatment permit #3-1406 or, in the case of an amendment to the land use permit #7R0841-13;

WHEREAS the discharge of leachate, even treated, into the Lake Memphremagog watershed represents a risk to public health;

WHEREAS the same concerns existed regarding a landfill site located in the Quebec portion of the Lake Memphremagog watershed and that pressure from civil society and the local municipalities and the MRC led to the permanent closure of the Bestan landfill site of the Waste Management company in Magog in 2010, in an explicit desire to protect Lake Memphremagog from a known source of pollution;

WHEREAS Representatives Woodman Page and Larry Labor have formally introduced Bill H.652 in the Vermont House of Commons, which seeks to permanently prohibit all discharge of leachate, treated or untreated, throughout the Lake Memphremagog watershed;

WHEREAS, after a first reading of the bill, it was referred to the Vermont House of Commons Environment Committee for analysis;

IT IS PROPOSED BY THE TABLE DE CONCERTATION DES ÉLUS:

THAT the Table expresses its formal and permanent opposition to the ~~treatment and~~ discharge of leachate or treated leachate from the Coventry landfill site at any place within the Lake Memphremagog watershed;

THAT the Table reiterates its commitment to the protection of Lake Memphremagog, its ecosystems and the quality of its water, in accordance with the precautionary principle;

THAT the Table supports Bill H.652 sponsored by Representatives Woodman Page and Larry Labor;

THAT the Table invites the Vermont House of Commons Environment Committee to continue favorably its analysis of the bill;

THAT the Table invites the municipalities concerned by this situation to express their support for this joint statement;

THAT the Table sends this joint statement:

- Department of Environmental Conservation, Watershed Management Division;
- Representatives Woodman Page and Larry Labor;

- To the Chair of the Environment Committee, Amy Sheldon;
- to Meaghan Sunderland, Consul – Head of Public Affairs, Political and Economic Relations for the Consulate General of Canada in Boston;
- Julie Morre, Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR)
- Municipalities bordering Lake Memphremagog and neighboring MRC's;
- To the Quebec Ministry of the Environment, Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks;
- To the organizations DUMP and MCI.



Mr. Gilles Bélanger
Member of Parliament for Orford

Mr. Louis Villeneuve, Member of Parliament for Brome Missisquoi
The Honorable Élisabeth Brière, Member of Parliament for Sherbrooke
Mariane Dandurand, députée fédérale de Compton Stanstead
Christine Labrie, Member of Provincial Parliament for Sherbrooke
Marie-Claude Bibeau, Mayor of Sherbrooke
Nathalie Pelletier, Mayor of Magog
Mrs. Lisette Maillé, Mayor of Austin
Mr. Jacques Demers, Prefect of the MRC Memphremagog

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