

From: [Jocelyn Baker](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Bradley, Jim](#)
Cc: [Huson, Diana](#); [Sendzik, Walter](#); [Jajean Rose](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: Ramsar Federal Correspondence Inclusion, staff report and agenda management
Date: Tuesday, September 08, 2020 5:29:56 AM
Attachments: [Federal Government ECCC Ramsar letter to Niagara Region.pdf](#)
[NiagaraRegion Ramsar Designation Endorsement Resolution Draft 2020.docx](#)
[NiagaraRegion RamsarDesignation Endorsement Request 2020.docx](#)

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Good morning Ann-Marie,

We have had the opportunity to review the agenda package for the September 9th PEDC meeting. We noticed the Federal correspondence from Environment and Climate Change Canada dated June 10, 2020 verifying Ramsar is a non-regulatory, voluntary framework was not included, although you indicated it would indeed form part of the agenda. In fact, we are at a loss as to why this correspondence provided three months ago has yet to make its way in front of Council, in the interest of full and transparent public record.

We are further disconcerted regarding the placement within the agenda (page 200+) and the direction of the Ramsar staff report PDS-C11-2020. Early conversations with planning staff (May 2020) informed our process. Staff confirmed they did not have the expertise, the time, nor the need to revisit Ramsar. They indicated because the PEDC had previously received a Ramsar delegation, including a staff analysis (PDS 39-2014) confirming no implications to the Niagara Region, the PEDC would likely be in a position for a concurrent endorsement recommendation following our presentation. It would have been important and respectful for staff to have advised us of a change in their approach. We feel we were misled to believe we shared the same commitment and goal of facilitating Council's endorsement of this internationally important designation. We have attached a copy of our original correspondence dated June 18, 2020, including the draft endorsement we prepared to help advance the Region's inclusion onto the prestigious list of Niagara River Ramsar champions.

Of most concern is staff's recommendation that "Following the presentation, it is suggested that Council refer the matter to Regional staff in order to solicit current stakeholder input prior to making a decision on its endorsement of the Ramsar designation". We simply do not understand the logic; how staff can rationalize the utilization of tax dollars and resources to duplicate the stakeholder engagement efforts and accomplishments of so many experts and countless hours of volunteer work by community partners, including Niagara College, Brock University and the University of Buffalo students, our future leaders. Extensive stakeholder and partner consultations, including Indigenous partners have taken place since 2013 on both sides of the border, with well over 50 community events and engagement opportunities to date. We fail to understand what additional stakeholders there may be, considering we have engaged widely and inclusively on both side of the river. We find this to be a superfluous recommendation forwarded by staff, especially since it suggests duplication in the face of a COVID-19 fiscally strapped economy.

We are looking forward to the opportunity to discuss the Ramsar designation on Wednesday September 9th with Council, however we do require prior assurance the Environment and Climate Change Canada letter dated June 10, 2020 and the Ramsar endorsement resolution (both attached) be included as part of the Ramsar portion of the agenda. We request the agenda be reorganized to have the report PDS-C 11-2020 follow our delegation. As experts,

we will make ourselves available to participate if required.

Finally, we request this email **be included** on the updated agenda as part of our delegation, in the spirit of transparency and accountability.

Regards

Jocelyn Baker on behalf of the Niagara River Ramsar Binational Steering Committee

Jocelyn Baker, MS, PMP

Canadian Co-chair

Niagara River Ramsar Designation Binational Steering Committee

jbaker@ramsar-niagara.ca

905-328-5213



Niagara Parks Commission, Regional Institute - University of Buffalo: University of New York (SUNY),
Great Lakes Center - Buffalo State: University of New York (SUNY), the Environmental Sustainability
Research Unit (Brock University), Niagara College, Western New York Land Conservancy, the Niagara
Restoration Council, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, Kerry Mitchell and Jocelyn Baker (unaffiliated)

June 18, 2020

Office of the Regional Chair
Niagara Region
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, P.O. Box 1042
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Dear Regional Chair Bradley:

RE: Niagara River Ramsar Designation Request for Endorsement

On behalf of the Niagara River Ramsar Binational Steering Committee, please accept our formal request for endorsement of the Niagara River as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Site). Members of the Ramsar committee appeared as a delegation at the September 2, 2015 Planning and Economic Development Committee where planning department staff detailed support of the Ramsar designation. Due to subsequent staffing interruptions, Niagara Region Ramsar endorsement has yet to be secured. Upon review of your delegation procedures, we note that as a former delegation with no new information to offer, appearing as a delegation is not a requirement. Recent discussions with planning staff also indicate the direct request for endorsement would be sufficient.

The accompanying Niagara River Ramsar designation "refresher" report, provides a background on the Ramsar Convention and where we are in the nomination process. We have also provided a Ramsar support letter from the federal government and a sample endorsement resolution similar to the one provided to the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Cities Initiative sponsored by Mayor Sendzik in 2018 and the NPCA sponsored by Diana Huson in 2019. The U.S. portion of the Niagara River was designated as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance on October 3, 2019. Next year (2021) marks the 50th year anniversary of the signing of the Ramsar Convention. The Ramsar Secretariat, the Canadian Government and our United States partners are keen to see the Niagara River realized as the first transboundary Ramsar site in the America's.

The members of the Ramsar committee would be happy to support the Niagara Region in securing a Ramsar endorsement for the Niagara River. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance, we look forward to achieving this globally significant designation together.

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Baker Canadian Co-Chair, Niagara River Ramsar Binational Steering Committee
Email: jbaker@ramsar-niagara.ca Phone: 905.328.5213

Jajeane Rose-Burney U.S. Co-Chair, Niagara River Ramsar Binational Steering Committee
Email: jajeane.rose@wnylc.org Phone: 716.247.1255

Cc: Ann-Marie Norio, Niagara Regional Clerk
Walter Sendzik, Mayor: City of St. Catharines & Vice-Chair GLSLCI
Diana Huson, Chair: Planning & Economic Development Committee

Regional Municipality of Niagara Endorsement Resolution: Niagara River Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Site)

WHEREAS, the Ramsar Convention is a voluntary global treaty, signed in Ramsar Iran in 1971, that promotes the conservation and wise use of water-based ecosystems, including lakes and rivers; and

WHEREAS, a nomination for the Niagara River to become a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Site) and the first transboundary Ramsar Site in the America's is being sought by U.S. and Canadian partners in order to recognize the importance of the Niagara River's contribution to the global natural environment; and

WHEREAS, a binational steering committee was formed to pursue the nomination, including oversight of the development of nomination documents, engagement plans, and other procedural requirements, as outlined in the Ramsar policy documents for each respective country; and

WHEREAS, the designation will not impose any additional regulations on property owners along the Niagara River Corridor; and

WHEREAS, the designation will open up greater opportunities for expanding tourism programming, promote increased public awareness of the River's importance to global biodiversity through research and development, and allow the Niagara River region to further foster cooperation and partnership between the United States and Canada to ensure conservation both within and around the Niagara River Corridor; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Regional Municipality of Niagara endorse the nomination of the Niagara River as a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Site).