

SECOND OPEN LETTER TO MRS. CHARLOTTE L'ÉCUYER

Danford Lake, December 9, 2008

Madam,

When you were interviewed by Daniel Mathieu on Radio-Canada (*Le Monde selon Mathieu*, December 5, 2008) in connection with our open letter of December 1, you made several statements that stand in need of correction.

Meeting with your constituents

You stated: "...*contrary to what was said in the open letter there was a meeting with the Coalition in 2006, with Mr Carrière.*"

We did not write that the Coalition had never met with you. We wrote (1) that "*you have ignored the concerns of citizens from your county and from neighboring regional municipalities for three years*" and (2) that you never responded to their repeated requests for a meeting "*neither before, nor during, nor after the last two election campaigns*" (in 2007 and 2008).

To acknowledge that your one and only encounter with your constituents dates back to June 2006 (two-and-a-half years ago) is a clear admission of how unavailable you made yourself. When a major project is capable of transforming their environment, it is quite understandable that citizens feel the need to consult with their MNA as the situation evolves.

Your support for the Pontiac mayors regarding the Danford Lake Project

You must be aware that support for the Danford Lake project by the Pontiac mayors is far from being unanimous. And the 13 Pontiac mayors in favour of this regional project represent only 19% of the Outaouais 67 mayors. The public hearings of the Quebec Environmental Review Board [known as *Bape*] exposed a serious lack of democracy in this matter.^[1]

Fred Ryan, a well-respected journalist in the region went so far as to write an article for the Ottawa Citizen (*Democracy Dies With Dump Deal*, October 12, 2006), which reads:

"The [Pontiac] MRC's Council of Mayors, after promising the citizens earlier this summer that it would have a referendum on the landfill, decided, at the end of September, to short-circuit [...] a referendum [...]. The MRC decision was not unanimous. Five mayors decided to vote against this flip-flop. According to Shawville Mayor, Albert Armstrong, the five refused to go back on the promise they had made to the citizens group. We can presume [...] that the other 13 mayors had no qualms about breaking their promise."

¹ "The commission finds that the local population has not had the opportunity to formally express their opinion to municipal authorities concerning the project to establish a technical landfill site at Danford Lake in the Municipality of Alayn-et-Cawood." (Bape Report 246, Opinions and Findings)

"It's unfortunate what I'm hearing, that the municipal governments could not agree with their taxpayers, and because it says clearly in the law that the municipal government has to consult people." (Jean Mbaraga, Danford Lake Project Officer, Quebec Ministry of the Environment, Bape document DT14-1, p. 21)

Importing waste from Ontario

During your Radio-Canada interview, you stated that the importation of waste originating in Ontario would be impossible because it is illegal.

The fallacy of this argument was demonstrated at the public hearings: although illegal, such importation is not only possible, it is already a daily reality – chiefly due to the lack of inspection at the border.^[2] This led the Directeur régional de l'analyse et de l'expertise de l'Outaouais to write:

"Moreover, we fear that in order to make his site economically viable there is a possibility that the promoter accepts waste coming from Ontario...given the difficulty of controlling such activity, given out geographic location..."^[3] [our translation]

The issues of democratic process and possible import of waste from Ontario were thoroughly dealt with at the 2007 public hearings. However, you continue using arguments as if these hearings had never taken place.

We should also like to take this opportunity to correct two points raised during the public debate at Campbell's Bay on Sunday, November 30, 2008.

Alternative solutions for the Pontiac

At Campbell's Bay, you acknowledged that you were not aware of alternative waste solutions available to the Pontiac, even though several Pontiac mayors are actively examining them. This is surprising, to say the least.

Had you accepted to meet with your constituents since June 2006, they would have informed you that MRC Pontiac has two alternatives to the Danford project.^[4] In an interview given to Radio-Canada after last Sunday's debate, the mayor of Campbell's Bay confirmed that Pontiac did indeed have "a plan B" should the provincial government fail to approve the Danford project.

Timetable for implementing a regional solution

At Campbell's Bay, you stated that the regional solution that the Outaouais Regional Council (Cré-0) was working on was "*very long term*" and the Technical Committee "*will not complete its work until 2011 and 'hopes' to deliver its recommendations in 2013.*" But, according to the timetable set by the Outaouais Regional Council in March 2008, the Technical Committee will submit its recommendations by the end of 2008 (which is within days) so that the adopted solution can be *implemented* in 2013.

² When she was questioned at the public hearings on May 17, 2007, Mrs. Christine Boucher (Direction régionale de l'Outaouais, Centre de contrôle environnemental) indicated that operators of Quebec triage centres (where garbage trucks coming from Ontario should be verified) are required, by virtue of their certificate of operation, to check the origin of waste received. In her great wisdom, the Chair of the Public Hearings Commission (Claudette Journault) then asked: "But how do you determine that the trucks coming from Ontario are all going to sorting centres?" Mrs. C. Boucher: "That's a good question. Do they all go to sorting centres? Well, that's a hard one. We would need to have people on the bridges [...]." (Bape document DT5-1, p.60)

Over several days in 2007, volunteers took photographs on the bridges between Ottawa and Gatineau, showing a regular unmonitored coming and going of garbage trucks between the two provinces.

³ Letter of 2006-12-11 to the Chef du service des projets en milieu terrestre (Bape documentation [PR6, p.61]).

⁴ These are: (1) an offer by a Pontiac businessman to build a waste transfer station from which all Pontiac waste would then be shipped to Lachute until 2013 ; (2) an incineration project, which was discussed again at the latest council of the MRC Pontiac, on November 26, 2008.

So, you see: given the constantly changing situation regarding this issue, several meetings with your constituents since 2006 would have been very useful. It is quite regrettable that, in this matter, you have chosen to listen only to those who support the Danford project, thus closing the door for two-and-a-half years to any constructive dialog with your constituents.

Sincerely,

André Carrière,
President

Cc: Mr. Jean Charest, Quebec Premier
M. Marc Carrière, MNA Chapleau
Mrs. Maryse Gaudreault, MNA Hull
Mr. Norman McMillan, MNA Papineau
Mrs. Stéphanie Vallée, MNA Gatineau
President of Cré-0
Mr. Pierre Rondeau, President, Outaouais Wardens Council
Mrs. Jocelyn Houle, President, Commission de l'environnement, Cré-0
M. Daniel Mathieu, Radio-Canada
Medias