

MADAM PRESIDENT LAVOIE, FORMER PRESIDENT BENOIT, AND FRIENDS OF MEMPHREMAGOG CONSERVATION INC.

IT IS AN HONOR TO BE HERE.

FOR THREE WEEKS I HAVE BEEN TRYING TO FIND WORDS FOR THIS MOMENT.

IN ANOTHER TIME, A MORE STABLE TIME, A MORE DEMOCRATIC TIME IN THE STATES, I WOULD HAVE REFLECTED SOLELY ON JOY.

ON THE HUMBLE JOY, THE JOY OF THIS SWEET HONOR OF BEING NAMED BY MEMPHREMAGOG CONSERVATION INC., TOGETHER WITH DUMP AS A VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION, AS JOINT RECIPIENTS TO RECEIVE THE 2025 GORDON KOHL CONSERVATION AWARD.

I WOULD LIKE VERMONT DUMP MEMBERS PRESENT TO INTRODUCE THEMSELVES. (TERESA, CHRIS, PEGGY, EFFIE) . ADDITIONAL ACTIVE MEMBERS, POLLY, ANN, ED, GILLIAN, ROBERT, WALTER, JOHN, ARE NOT ABLE TO BE PRESENT. ROBERT BENOIT IS IN THE ROOM.

MY NAME IS HENRY COE. SEVEN YEARS AGO THIS MONTH, I FOUND MYSELF AT A PUBLIC HEARING TO LEARN OF THE 51 ACRE PROPOSED EXPANSION QF THE COVENTRY LANDFILL, VERMONT'S ONLY PERMITTED LANDFILL.

THERE WERE MORE CASELLA CORPORATE EXECUTIVES, LAWYERS, AND STATE OFFICIALS THAN MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN THE ROOM. AFTER OFFICIAL PRESENTATIONS OF THE EXPANSION, I REMEMBER JUST TWO COMMENTS:

ONE LADY, A MRS FORNIER, STOOD AND SAID, "I LIVE IN COVENTRY TO THE WEST OF THE LANDFILL. I AM OLD FASHIONED AND DRY MY FAMILY'S WASH ON THE CLOTHESLINE. BECAUSE I SMELL STRONG ODORS FROM THE GARBAGE, I WONDER IF CHEMICALS ARE BEING DEPOSITED ON MY YOUNG DAUGHTER'S UNDERWEAR, AND IF THIS WILL HURT HER SKIN?" NO VERMONT STATE OFFICIAL OR CASELLA EXECUTIVE ANSWERED HER QUESTION.

I MADE THE SECOND COMMENT, TWO PAGES IN OPPOSITION TO THE EXPANSION. I RECOUNTED, HOW I USED TO TAKE MY OWN GARBAGE ON SATURDAY MORNINGS TO OLD CHARLIE NADEAU'S 12 ACRE DUMP, AND WOULD WATCH HIM PUSH IT WITH HIS DOZER DOWNHILL AND INTO THE ADJACENT WETLANDS. I WAS HELPING TO POISON THE BLACK RIVER. A TOTAL OF 129 LANDFILL ACRES, IS STILL SIGHTED IN THE SAME PLACE, FIFTY YEARS LATER.

IT IS INAPPROPRIATE TO SIGHT A GARBAGE DUMP, ADJACENT TO A WETLAND, UPSLOPE AND WITHIN A MILE OF AN INTERNATIONAL LAKE AND NORTHERN FLOWING WATERWAY.

THAT NIGHT I WAS UNAWARE THAT 175.000 CANADIANS USED THE LAKE AS THEIR DRINKING WATER RESERVOIR. IF I HAD KNOWN THAT I WOULD HAVE SAID THAT IT IS IMMORAL.

I ALSO STATED THAT NOT A SINGLE TRUCKLOAD OF GARBAGE IS INSPECTED FOR TOXIC CHEMICALS PRIOR TO DUMPING. I RECOMMENDED INSPECTIONS OF EVERY LOAD, SIMILAR TO LAB-SAMPLES TAKEN PRIOR TO MILK PICK-UP AT DAIRY FARMS.

I SAID THAT THE DECLINING POPULATION OF NEWPORT AND ORLEANS COUNTY DID NOT JUSTIFY SUCH A LARGE EXPANSION. (AT THAT TIME, I DIDN'T KNOW THE TERM FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE, WHEN LOCAL PEOPLE FROM THE TRI-COUNTY NORTHEAST KINGDOM SUPPLY JUST 7% OF THE LANDFILL'S CAPACITY; THE OTHER 93% COMING FROM THE REST OF VERMONT AND OUT OF STATE.)

I DISPUTED CASELLA'S CLAIM THAT THE PLASTICIZED LINER AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LANDFILL WOULD LAST 600 YEARS.

SOON AFTER, FRIENDS JOINED FOR A LUNCH MEETING IN BARTON. WE WROTE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF A LOCAL PAPER, EXPLAINING PROBLEMS OF THE EXPANSION. FOLKS CALLED AND EXPRESSED SUPPORT.

IN AUGUST 2018, CHRIS JACOBS AND I DROVE TO MAGOG AND FOUND THE OFFICES OF MEMPHREMAGOG CONSERVATION INC. ROBERT BENOIT, THEN PRESIDENT, WELCOMED US WARMLY, LISTENED, AND OFFERED TO COLLABORATE.

THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE DUMP-MCI PARTNERSHIP.

ON OUR RETURN THROUGH NEWPORT, WE MADE A SEPTEMBER RESERVATION FOR THE GATEWAY CENTER PUBLIC MEETING. 130 VERMONTERS AND QUEBECERS PACKED THE HALL. ROBERT AND ARIANE WERE PANELISTS TOGETHER WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND OTHERS. A CASELLA EXECUTIVE WAS INVITED AS A PANELIST, HE CHOSE NOT TO ATTEND.

FROM THAT MEETING, APPROXIMATELY 70 COMMENTS WERE GENERATED TO VERMONT STATE GOVERNMENT IN OPPOSITION TO THE EXPANSION. ONLY ONE COMMENT WAS IN FAVOR, THAT COMING FROM CASELLA ITSELF, THE LANDFILL OWNER.

YET THE STATE ACTED TO APPROVE THE EXPANSION THE FOLLOWING MONTH.

WE FORMED A DUMP ADVISORY COMMITTEE . OUR FIRST ACTION WAS TO FILE A FORMAL LEGAL APPEAL AGAINST THE STATE PERMIT GRANTING THE LANDFILL EXPANSION

DUMP HAS MET APPROXIMATELY ONCE PER MONTH. ROBERT BENOIT WAS AN ACTIVE MEMBER FOR OUR FIRST SIX YEARS. WE HAVE ALL EARNED PHD'S IN GARBOLOGY. THANK YOU, ROBERT, FOR YOUR INSIGHT, PERSEVERANCE, AND GOOD HUMOR.

ROBERT WAS ALSO A MEMBER OF OUR FOUR MEMBER DUMP MEDIATION TEAM TO RESOLVE THE LEGAL APPEAL BY DUMP OF THE DECISION BY THE STATE PERMITTING THE 51 ACRE LANDFILL EXPANSION. TERESA GRADE. A MEMBER OF THAT TEAM CAN BEST DESCRIBE THE IMPORTANT RESULT. (Teresa)

THANKS, TERESA. DUMP MEMBERS CONTINUE THE GOOD FIGHT. AS EFFIE BROWN IS FOND OF SAYING, "WE ARE ON THE SIDE OF RIGHT."

IT IS A MORAL IMPERATIVE TO WORK TO MAKE THE MORATORIUM ON DISPOSAL OF LANDFILL LEACHATE, ANYWHERE IN OUR WATERSHED, A PERMANENT MORATORIUM.

IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GREATEST GULF IN U.S. - CANADIAN RELATIONS IN MY LIFETIME, MCI'S AWARD TO DUMP OF THIS CONSERVATION AWARD, AND HERE IN THE CITY OF MAGOG, QUEBEC, IS ESPECIALLY POIGNANT.

I LOOK AROUND THIS ROOM, AT THE LOVE PRESENT, GATHERED TOGETHER, NO MATTER THE NATIONALITY, BECAUSE WE CARE FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT. SEEING FACES OF FRIENDS, NOW ALMOST FAMILY, I AM REMINDED OF HOW OUR COUNTLESS HOURS OF EFFORT, ARE WORTHWHILE.

MCI HAS BEEN A BEACON. ROBERT BENOIT HAS BEEN OUR MENTOR. JOHANNE LAVOIE, YOUR NEW PRESIDENT, HAS DEMONSTRATED ENTHUSIASM, COMPETENCE, AND A PASSIONATE CONCERN FOR THE IMPACT OF LANDFILL TOXICS IN OUR LAKE.

AS A VERMONT I CANNOT BE ALL JOYFUL. AN UNWELCOME DARKNESS IS GATHERING IN MY COUNTRY.

EARLIER THIS WEEK, THE U.S. PRESIDENT NATIONALIZED TROOPS TO QUELL PEACEFUL PROTESTS IN SUPPORT OF IMMIGRANT WORKERS, - WHO GIVE US OUR FOOD AND CONSTRUCT OUR HOMES.

THROUGH EXECUTIVE ORDERS HE SLASHES CLIMATE PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT FOR PROTECTION OF OUR ENVIRONMENT.

AS WE ALL KNOW, IN LATE JANUARY OF THIS YEAR, HIS SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY, ENTERED THE HASKELL FREE LIBRARY, INSULTING LIBRARY STAFF, AND ALL CANADIANS.

SHE ACTED TO BAR THE FRONT DOOR TO CANADIAN CITIZENS. A MORE THAN 100 YEAR OLD LEGACY AND TRADITION OF OPEN BORDERS HAD BEEN BROKEN.

AND LITERALLY, AS WE ARE ASSEMBLED HERE ON JUNE 14, THE U.S. PRESIDENT IS CONDUCTING A HUGE MILITARY PARADE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. A MILITARY PARADE FIT ONLY FOR DICTATORS.

THIS IS NOT THE AMERICA I WAS BORN INTO, AND THAT I KNOW.

IT IS WONDERFUL TO BE YOUR GUESTS IN CANADA. TO BREATHE THE AIR OF A DEMOCRACY.

YOUR NEWLY ELECTED PRIME MINISTER MARK CARNEY GOT IT RIGHT WHEN HE USED THE WORD "BETRAYAL". "WE ARE OVER THE SHOCK OF THE AMERICAN BETRAYAL. BUT WE SHALL NEVER FORGET THE LESSONS."

YOUR DEMOCRACY IS IN SAFE HANDS WITH MARK CARNEY. HE IS AN INTELLIGENT, QUIET, DIPLOMATIC UNIFIER. A LEADER FOR CANADA, AND I BELIEVE A LEADER FOR NORTH AMERICA.

CANADA, YOU GUARD THE LIGHT.

THANK YOU FOR THIS HONOR.