



August 1, 2023

Honourable Minister David Piccini
Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks
5th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

Sent Via E-mail

Subject: Request for Air Quality Monitoring Station in the Timiskaming Health Unit region

We are writing to request the installation of a traditional National Air Pollution Surveillance (NAPS) air quality monitoring station within the Timiskaming Health Unit catchment area. The recent smoke from Quebec, Ontario and western Canada wildfires has identified that there is a significant gap in monitoring stations in northern Ontario. This gap in air monitoring and subsequent lack of access to the provincial Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) measurement tool makes it very challenging for agencies and community members to make informed decisions to mitigate negative health outcomes during poor air quality events.

The implementation of a NAPS air monitoring station is crucial to ensure that accurate air quality monitoring data is available to best protect our communities during poor air quality events due to forest fire smoke. The implementation of a NAPS air monitor will provide local community partners with accurate data to increase public awareness and knowledge regarding air quality and its impact on health. Additionally, a NAPS air monitor will enable residents, especially those who are higher risk or caring for those who are higher risk such as children, elderly, and individuals with pre-existing cardiac and respiratory conditions, to make informed decisions during poor air quality events.

As the impacts from climate change continue to rise, the frequency, extent, timing, and duration of the forest fire season is expected to substantially increase¹, further heightening the urgency for effective air quality monitoring in northern Ontario. Monitoring air quality will improve our understanding of the complex interactions between climate change, forest fire smoke and air pollution across the Timiskaming Health Unit region and support the development of targeted strategies to address these interconnected issues.

Please consider this request for the timely installation of a NAPS air quality monitoring station in the Timiskaming Health Unit area. Access to air quality monitoring data will also enable Timiskaming Health Unit to fulfill obligations under the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) to protect the health and well-being of our local communities. Furthermore, local air monitoring technology will enhance local public health capacity to mitigate environmental health risks² such as adverse population health outcomes resulting from poor air quality.

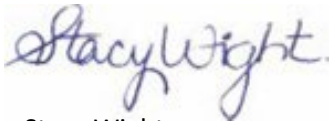
Air monitoring technology will also ensure that our residents will have access to accurate and real time air quality data that will empower our communities to make informed decisions, reduce exposure to pollutants and improve overall health outcomes.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your positive response and discussing the next steps in implementing air quality monitoring stations in the Timiskaming Health Unit region.

References:

1. Douglas, A.G. and Pearson, D. (2022). Ontario; Chapter 4 in Canada in a Changing Climate: Regional Perspectives Report, (ed.) F.J. Warren, N. Lulham, D.L. Dupuis and D.S. Lemmen; Government of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.
2. Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Healthy Environments and Climate Change Guideline, 2018. Retrieved from:
https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/protocols_guidelines/Healthy_Environments_and_Climate_Change_Guideline_2018_en.pdf

Yours sincerely,



Stacy Wight
Board of Health Chair



Dr. Glenn Corneil
Acting Medical Officer of Health/CEO

Copy: Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier of Ontario, Minister of Health
Honourable Steven Guibeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Bernard Derible, Parliamentary Deputy Minister, Emergency Management, Treasury Board Secretariat Commissioner of Emergency Management
Honourable John Vanthof, Member of Provincial Parliament Timiskaming - Cochrane
Honourable Charlie Angus, Member of Parliament Timmins
Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Member of Parliament, Minister of Health
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Health Agencies (alPHA)
All Ontario Boards of Health
All Member Municipalities of the Temiskaming Health Unit