March 28, 2008

Mayor Fred Eisenberger
City of Hamilton
Hamilton City Centre
77 James Street North, Suite 230
Hamilton, ON L8R 2K3

Dear Mayor Eisenberger,

I would like to take this opportunity to commend your efforts and the hard work of City Council and staff in implementing an aerial gypsy moth spraying program for affected areas in the City of Hamilton.

I only wish that the Province of Ontario would show the same degree of interest in combating the damage caused by these pests. I hope the work done by Hamilton, West Lincoln and other municipalities will provoke matching funds from the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR).

While I am pleased to see the City is seriously contemplating a spray program, I must express my concern — and the concerns of many Binbrook residents that have contacted my office — that the City’s gypsy moth control plan, as proposed, only includes public and private properties in affected urban areas.

Binbrook was found to have a higher count of egg-masses-per-hectare than any other area tested in the city (according to the Public Works Committee report PW08028) yet it is not covered in the proposed aerial spraying plan. This program is especially important for rural areas, given the higher concentration of egg masses and tree foliage.

As you know, I have been lobbying for some time to have the MNR come to the table and provide affected municipalities and property owners with funding for a gypsy moth spraying program. I have done so because I acknowledge that such a program is too costly an endeavour for most municipalities to effectively administer on their own.

Furthermore, gypsy moths do not respect municipal boundaries and could return to our area from adjacent communities unless they also implement a spray program. That’s why, as you can see from my attached correspondence, I have called for a cost shared provincial-municipal-property-owner spraying program.

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Still, I must request on behalf of the residents of Binbrook and other rural areas that City Council ensures rural areas are included in the City gypsy moth spraying plan. Both rural and urban Hamilton property owners have contributed tax dollars to fund this $450,000 City initiative. It's only fair that both rural and urban areas are covered in the plan and are treated equally with respect to the costs involved.

In closing please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,

Tim Hudak, MPP
Niagara West-Glanbrook

cc: Coun. David Mitchell, Ward 11
January 30, 2008

Hon. Donna Cansfield  
Ministry of Natural Resources  
6630-99 Wellesley St. W,  
6th Floor, Whitney Block  
Toronto, ON M7A 1W3

Dear Minister Cansfield,

With the first day of spring just 50 days away, I am writing to stress the urgent need for the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to help fund a spraying program to prevent the further spread of gypsy moths in southern Ontario this year.

As the new Minister of Natural Resources, you have the opportunity to make a difference for property owners and nature lovers in Hamilton, Niagara and the surrounding areas. It’s not too late to avoid unnecessary damage to personal property, parks and the environment, but the deadline to take action is fast approaching. Spraying must be done in early spring before the gypsy moth larva hatch (typically in mid-April) and proceed to devour thousands of acres of foliage, from which many trees will not recover.

Minister, as I did with your predecessor at the MNR, I am calling on you to immediately fund a shared cost gypsy moth spraying program with municipalities that have demonstrated a need or interest such as Hamilton and West Lincoln.

It is logistically impossible for smaller municipalities like West Lincoln to fight this infestation on their own. Landowners in these affected areas are doing their best to fight the infestation and municipalities, like Hamilton and West Lincoln, are trying to address the issue, but they really need the Province to come to table to make it work.

The gypsy moth infestations are currently confined to fairly well-defined areas which, if treated immediately, can be contained and eventually wiped out. The longer the ministry waits to get involved, the more expensive it is going to be when this annual infestation spreads across the province, including the provincially protected greenbelt.

In closing, please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,

Tim Hudak, MPP  
Niagara West-Glanbrook
March 10, 2008

Hon. Donna Cansfield
Ministry of Natural Resources
6630-99 Wellesley St. W,
6th Floor, Whitney Block
Toronto, ON M7A 1W3

Dear Minister Cansfield,

With spring nearly upon us, I am writing to you to once again express the immediate need for the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to help municipalities – such as Hamilton, West Lincoln and Pelham – fund an aerial gypsy moth spraying program.

As I have said in previous letters, gypsy moth infestation is a growing and serious threat to Niagara, Hamilton and the surrounding regions’ forested areas. The area of defoliation grew exponentially in 2007, affecting an estimated 31,000 acres of foliage from Hamilton to Pelham and parts in between. That’s more than double the 12,000 acres affected by gypsy moth infestation in 2006. Based on the amount of egg masses left from last year, arbourists fear this annual infestation will continue to grow in 2008 unless something is done to diminish the amount of gypsy moth eggs that hatch this spring (typically in mid-to-late April depending on the weather).

Hamilton city council, which hired a consultant last year to study the spread of gypsy moths in their city, will likely receive a report later this month from its public works department on the logistics of implementing its own spraying program. Similarly, the Town of Pelham has had discussions with the Township of West Lincoln and the Niagara Parks Commission to partner together for a spraying program. Both municipalities will host public meetings on the subject this month before deciding on the best course of action.

I applaud these municipalities and the NPC for their initiative and co-operation, and I believe they will make every effort to spray as many infested areas as possible. Despite their best efforts, large areas and countless trees currently home to gypsy moth egg masses will not be sprayed. Smaller municipalities, such as Pelham and West Lincoln, simply can not afford to do so on their own, even with concerned property owners and the NPC pitching in.

Minister, it’s time the Province came to the table and offered support to these municipalities and landowners, who have shown an interest in creating a gypsy moth spraying program, but who logistically can not fight this infestation on their own.

In closing, please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,

Tim Hudak, MPP
Niagara West-Glanbrook

cc: Mayor Fred Eisenberger, City of Hamilton; Mayor Katie Trombeta, Township of West Lincoln; Mayor Dave Augustyn, Town of Pelham; Mr. Jim Williams, Chairman, Niagara Parks Commission

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