January 7, 2011

Mayor and Members of Council
City of Hamilton

Subject: Proposed Water and Sewer Rates

On behalf of the Directors, staff and members of the Bay Area Restoration Council (BARC), I write in support of the proposed increase of 4.2 percent.

While none of us, as taxpayers, desire increased out-of-pocket costs, we strongly believe in investing in a sustainable future for our community. That future must include significant infrastructure investments to improve our handling of wastewater. These improvements include enhancing our ability to manage increasing volumes due to growth and more frequent extreme weather events. They also include the addition of tertiary treatment for sewage that is needed to improve water quality in Hamilton Harbour. As you know, this is a requirement to delist Hamilton Harbour as one of the International Joint Commission’s Areas of Concern from which we will derive further direct and indirect economic benefits.

We recognize that increased water rates marginally depress consumption which can negatively impact revenues. However, reduced consumption does yield environmental benefits on its own.

When one considers the current and projected debt load for the City of Hamilton, our water rates relative to surrounding communities and the fact that this increase is the lowest in a decade, we recommend its approval. If there were to be any consideration of changing the rate, it should only to be related to increasing it further.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Hudson

Jim Hudson
Executive Director