



August 9, 2011

**Mayor John Henry,
City of Oshawa,
Ontario, Canada**

Second Marsh and the proposed FarmTech Ethanol Refinery

Southern Ontario's marshes and other wetlands have been largely eliminated over the past century; those that remain fulfill valuable functions for all of us, and preservation of the remaining wetlands deserves our urgent attention. The proposal for an ethanol refinery on the edge of Second Marsh, Oshawa's highly significant wetland, poses a great threat to the wetland's continued existence. I am among those who feel that this threat should be firmly opposed.

Inevitably, as shown by many previous examples, a chemical factory on the edge of a wetland will cause progressive environmental degradation. Chemicals released over time, either intentionally or accidentally, will find their way into the wetland, altering water quality and adversely affecting numerous plants and animals that depend on the wetland for their survival. Dumping of materials into the wetland may also occur, gradually filling it in, as has happened in many other instances in Ontario. Not only would degradation of the wetland diminish its many contributions including enhancement of water quality, prevention of erosion, and provision of spawning grounds for fish and living space for many species, but such degradation would also deprive Ontario citizens of social, economic, and esthetic benefits, including the opportunity to visit, enjoy, and learn about the natural environment. For all these reasons, a chemical factory should not be located on the edge of one of the best remaining wetlands along the edge of Lake Ontario.

Recent studies have shown that the production of ethanol from corn or other materials has not been economically successful to date, and is not commercially competitive --- such operations have been kept going, and the resulting ethanol made affordable, only with massive government subsidies. Large amounts of energy (usually derived from coal or other fossil fuels) are required to distill ethanol from the fermented broth in which it is produced, so that in terms of energy efficiency, the production and use of ethanol as a biofuel makes a poor showing. In addition, diverting land from food production to biofuel production at a time when the human population needs more food is highly questionable, both practically and morally. (All these problems have

been recently reviewed in the August issue of Scientific American, in an article entitled: "The False Promise of Biofuels"). At present, governments world-wide (and certainly in Canada) are intent on cutting expenses; therefore, setting up an operation that depends on government subsidies to stay afloat seems a poor risk for taxpayers --- not worth giving up a valuable natural resource which, once lost, may never be renewed.

I hope and trust that the City of Oshawa will find a way to preserve its valuable natural resources, and resist the "false promise" of an economically doubtful chemical factory in the wrong location.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harold L. Atwood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'H' and 'A'.

Harold L. Atwood