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Mayor Cornell, members of council

Thank you for the opportunity to address you on this very important matter.

I am not a resident of Tiny. I live a couple of kilometres to the south in Springwater. However I rely on the aquifer that is under threat here. The water from the artesian spring that feeds my well is pure and delicious. We have a flow that goes into a ditch and sometimes we take water there. Visitors from the city cannot believe that we can drink water straight from the ground. That's sad.

At the end of my road, the Elmvale flow attracts thousands of people who want pure untreated water, some because of health concerns, some because it's a deeply felt human need, to have water the way nature delivers it.

I am here on behalf of AWARE Simcoe. We are the successor organization to the Stop Dump Site 41 group which was part of a coalition of First Nations, local residents, farmers, cottagers and people from across Ontario in preventing construction of a landfill site over this aquifer. The summer of 2009 was when the struggle culminated – bringing together people from every walk of life - young and old, wealthy and living day to day. On one memorable occasion more than 1,000 people packed into the Perkinsfield pavilion for a rally to stop the dump.

Members of your council – George Lawrence, Andre Claire and the late Nigel Warren - were at our side, regularly visiting the protest camp. Ray Millar, when subsequently elected mayor, enrolled Tiny in the Blue Communities Project, recognizing that water is a shared resource for all.

This water is important to many people and the reason is that here, in the middle of rural Ontario, 30 years ago, a young scientist decided to sample the artesian well at his Springwater farm, and took the water to the University of Berne where he was studying Arctic ice cores. To his surprise, this water tested cleaner than 4,000-year-old Arctic ice.

Over time, the water was used in many studies, becoming the “gold standard” of water quality and Dr. William Shotyk rose through various academic institutions to become Chair for Agriculture and the Environment at the University of Alberta. And a team of

scientists, including eminent hydrogeologists like Dr. John Cherry of the University of Guelph and Dr. Ian Clark of the University of Ottawa, is now embarked on a study of what makes this water so clean.

We have a natural phenomenon in our corner of the world that mystifies scientists. What can they discover about the mechanisms whereby rain is intercepted by the forest of the Waverley Uplands and the way the water is filtered through rock, gravel and sand, its path slowed by roots, humus and clay until it reaches the aquifers that store and transport it?

What we can learn from the system nature has perfected here may be of benefit to humanity at a time when access to clean water is already at a crisis. We are the stewards of this water and history will judge us if we allow it to be squandered.

Tiny Township has been steadfast in the past in the face of what looked like intractable obstacles. The ministry of the environment, conservation and parks is not set up to preserve uniquely clean water. Even on its own terms, it has earned the mistrust of local residents, dismissing the real hardships endured over the past 10 years by the people of the Waverley area – residents of Tiny, Springwater, Tay and Oro-Medonte, as this is where the four townships meet.

We at AWARE Simcoe recognize that sorting through the legislative and political obstacles that face us will not be easy. But if we do not fight, we will not win.

We call on you to ensure that no further steps are taken in exploiting this resource until the Cherry study is completed and can point the way to proper protection measures. That means that the 10-year permit to take water must be suspended or withdrawn.

We have a provincial government that has expressed its commitment to ensuring that the will of local councils is respected on land use decisions.

Let your will be clearly expressed. We urge you to appeal the ministry's action in granting the PTTW. And we will work in your support to get this regrettable decision reversed and the water protected.

Thank you