

THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF ONTARIO
LE CONSEIL DES FEMMES DE LA PROVINCE D'ONTARIO

ANNUAL BRIEF

FOR PRESENTATION TO

THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

THE HONOURABLE DALTON MCGUINTY, PREMIER

Milica Kovacevich, President

Marianne Wilkinson, Vice President Resolutions

The Hon. James K. Bartleman
Lieutenant Governor of Ontario
Honourary President, Provincial Council of Women of Ontario

November 2006

BRIEF TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO – 2006

PROFILE OF COUNCIL

The Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) was founded in 1923 as an affiliate of the National Council of Women of Canada, which was founded in 1893, and the International Council of Women established in 1888.

PCWO's Affiliated Members:

Local Councils

Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton, London, Windsor, and St. Catharines;

Provincially Organized Societies

Association of Early Childhood Educators – Ontario

Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Ontario

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

Older Women's Network Ontario Inc.

Ontario Dental Hygienists' Association

Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

Ontario Home Economics Association

Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation

Ontario Women's Liberal Commission

Polish Alliance Ladies Circle

Polish Canadian Women's Federation

Salvation Army

Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada

PREAMBLE

The Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) is pleased to present its 2006 Annual Brief to the Government of Ontario and looks forward to hearing of the actions planned by the Premier and appropriate Government Ministries to address our concerns.

This is the 83rd Brief presented to the Government of Ontario. Over the past decades the PCWO has been a leader in bringing to the Government's attention, matters of concern to many Ontarians.

Established in 1923, as an affiliate of the National Council of Women (established in 1893) the aim of the Council is to work for the betterment of conditions pertaining to family, community and society.

PCWO is composed of 6 Local Councils and 13 Provincially Organized Societies. Each year these organizations research areas of concern such as: health, safety, education, environment, land-use, justice and seniors issues, to name a few, and their proposed resolutions are circulated to all of our affiliates for study and input. Resolutions are then presented to the delegates from each affiliate at the AGM, possibly amended and then voted on. This grass roots process, following basic democratic principles, produces policies to present to the appropriate government ministry.

This year PCWO will be available on Monday, November 20 9:00 am to 4:00 pm in Room 228 of the Legislative Building to present our Brief to the Government and our members. We look forward to a dialogue with the appropriate Ministers or their representatives on the content of the resolutions, which are presented in full in this Brief. We also look forward to the responses of all political parties.

These resolutions were approved by our membership for submission to the Government of Ontario. To assist in the review, each resolution has been placed on a separate page. In addition to the resolutions, PCWO has included comments on emerging and current issues we wish to bring to the Government's attention.

2006 RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTIONS

Proposed resolutions are drafted by the local councils and/or affiliates and are submitted to the PCWO Resolutions Vice-President. All proposed resolutions must include appropriate background material to substantiate the merits of the proposed resolutions. The whereas clauses must reflect the background material and the first resolve clause addresses Provincial Council of Women policy and the second resolve clause is direction to the Government. **PCWO may speak on an issue only if it has policy.**

After a review by the VP Resolutions the proposed resolutions are circulated to the membership, from across the province, for discussion. The membership reviews the draft resolutions and votes on their acceptance or rejection, and/or submits amendments. The results of the local review process are forwarded back to the VP Resolutions. The proposed resolutions and amendments are once again forwarded to the membership for final debate at the AGM.

The resolutions in this Annual Brief were passed at the **83rd Annual General Meeting** of Provincial Council of Women of Ontario in May 2006, in Hamilton, Ontario. They represent the thinking of a wide variety of Ontarians.

POLICY UPDATES 2006

Policy Updates are revisions of previously approved policies that have been reviewed and updated.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS

Emergency Resolutions are presented at the Annual General Meeting and are voted for acceptance as emerging issues that require action prior to the next Annual General Meeting.

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Resolution # 1

**OLDER WOMEN'S BREAST AND GYNECOLOGICAL HEALTH
STATUS**

- Whereas #1** statistically the incidence of breast, cervical and ovarian cancer increases with age; and
- Whereas #2** the Government of Ontario's Breast & Mammography Screening Program has a policy of not including women after the age of 74; and
- Whereas #3** there is no existing government program that recommends testing for cervical or ovarian cancer in older women; and
- Whereas #4** aging women may have memory impairment, no family physician, and may require updated information about their breast and gynecological health status; therefore be it

RESOLVED #1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy:

That older women be eligible for routine annual or bi-annual breast and gynecological examinations.

RESOLVED #2 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to:

- a) **provide notification of eligibility for an annual or bi-annual breast screening examination and mammogram to women over the age of 74 years; and**
- b) **develop similar routine gynecological health screening programs for cervical, ovarian and other forms of gynecological cancer.**

Resolution #2

ELIMINATING DRIVER AGE DISCRIMINATION

- Whereas #1** a major research study, Canadian Driving Research Initiative for Vehicular Safety in the Elderly (CanDRIVE) found the vast majority of older drivers continue to be safe drivers; and
- Whereas #2** there is an obligatory vision and knowledge test as well as a 90 minute group education session every two years for drivers over the age of 80 to keep their driving license; and
- Whereas #3** drivers age 65 and over are involved in the least number of accidents in all age groups; and
- Whereas #4** re-examination of driving ability is required for a licensed driver aged 70 years or over who has been involved in one or more collisions where there is some indication of improper driver action; and
- Whereas #5** licensed drivers under age 70 years are not required to undergo re-examination of their driving ability unless involved in three or more collisions within two years and some indication of improper driver action; therefore be it

RESOLVED #1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy:

That all drivers be treated equally, with re-examination of driving ability for those aged 70 to 80 years be the same as required for drivers under age 70.

RESOLVED #2 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to:

Amend Ontario Traffic Act B, Regulation 340-94 Section 16B, under the Ministry of Transportation Driver Improvement, so that re-examination of driving ability for those aged 70 to 80 years is the same as required for drivers under age 70.

Resolution #3

SENIORS AGE 60 TO 65 ON SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

- Whereas #1** the poorest citizens are often those aged 60 to 65 who are receiving social assistance; and
- Whereas #2** prior to 1995 those over age 60, without income or employment, were automatically eligible for Family Benefits in the permanently unemployed category. After 1995 these same persons were considered “employable” up to age 65 and were required to seek work; and
- Whereas #3** persons age 60 and over face large barriers finding employment when the work requires specific skills or is physically demanding, especially for those facing health problems; and
- Whereas #4** unless disabled, those seniors in need of financial assistance are only eligible for Ontario Works (social Assistance) on which they can not subsist without detriment to their health; and
- Whereas #5** seniors in need of financial assistance could live better on the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP); therefore be it
- RESOLVED #1** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy:

That persons aged 60 to 65, in need of financial assistance, automatically qualify for adequate financial support until they are gainfully employed or reach age 65.

RESOLVED #2 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to:

- a) enact legislation to ensure that persons aged 60 to 65, in need of financial assistance, automatically qualify for adequate financial support until they are gainfully employed or reach age 65, and**
- b) ensure that the public is notified of this change.**

Resolution #4

RENTAL PROTECTION FOR TENANTS

- Whereas #1** under the terms of the Rental Protection Act, tenants have only five business days to send a written request for a hearing to the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal, and each year thousands of tenants, many owing minimal amounts of money, miss the deadline and are evicted without a hearing; and
- Whereas #2** eviction from a home places an additional financial burden on households already in difficult financial circumstances; causes emotional stress; has negative impacts on children; and often leads to individuals and families living in unsuitable, unaffordable accommodations, or even being homeless; and
- Whereas #3** although the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal can use discretion in its decisions given personal circumstances, it seldom does, and the consideration of such factors as rental availability and affordability, and other factors recognized under human rights legislation are not required under the Act; and
- Whereas #4** in 2003 the Government of Ontario promised to introduce legislation that will protect tenants and dispense with such an unfair procedure but has not yet done so; therefore be it
- RESOLVED #1** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy:
- a) tenants protection from evictions under provincial rent protection legislation, through automatic access to a hearing and a consideration of individual circumstances such as risk of homelessness**
 - b) evictions be an extraordinary remedy of last resort, to be ordered if there are no other reasonable alternative remedies**
 - c) time for notification of a hearing be extended with assurance that the tenant understand the notification; and**

RESOLVED #2 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to

- a) immediately repeal the provisions of the Tenant Protection Act 1997 that allow for evictions without a hearing**
- b) amend the Tenant Protection Act or introduce new legislation that requires the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal to consider granting relief from eviction, taking into consideration affordable housing availability, disability or other factors recognized under human rights legislation**
- c) provide an over-riding policy within new legislation that eviction is an extraordinary remedy of last resort, that should not be ordered if there are other reasonable alternatives and remedies.**

Resolution #5

WORKPLACE RIGHTS FOR PART TIME WORKERS

- Whereas #1** increasingly jobs in Ontario are part time, contract or temporary, and workers lack job security, decent wages and benefits and often live in poverty; and
- Whereas #2** increasingly workers, many of them women and immigrants, are hired indirectly through unregulated temporary agencies and sub-contractors who may flout labour laws and violate workers' basic rights; and
- Whereas #3** workers who 'elect' to work less than 20 hours are not entitled to receive the same hourly wages and benefits as those who work full time, but it is difficult to ascertain whether it is an 'election' or the employer has limited hours; and
- Whereas #4** the majority of labour standard violations fail to be reported to the Ministry of Labour; workers are owed millions of dollars from fly-by-night operations and sub-contractors, but are either afraid to complain or ignorant of their rights, and the Ministry of Labour is far behind in enforcing existing legislation and regulations; therefore be it

RESOLVED #1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy:

The principle of full workplace protection, rights and pro-rated benefits to all part-time worker.

RESOLVED #2 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to:

- a) amend provincial labour standards and regulations to ensure that all part-time workers receive the same protection, rights and pro-rated benefits as those guaranteed to full-time workers;**
- b) regulate temporary work agencies under a strengthened Employment Agencies Act;**

- c) remove the minimum hourly limit for paying minimum wage to employees**
- d) vigorously enforce labour standards under the Employment Standards Act**

Resolution #6

ACCESS TO POST SECONDARY EDUCATION

- Whereas #1** A well educated population helps ensure Ontario's social, environmental and economic well being, and a post secondary education helps graduates meet their full potential and secure their future well being; and
- Whereas #2** post secondary education has become prohibitively costly for many high school graduates from middle and low income families, preventing some from seeking further education and forcing others to assume unreasonable levels of debt; and
- Whereas #3** Ontario provides grants for low income students, but there is little help for those from middle income families, and though Ontario has increased loan limits this just adds to the student debt load; and
- Whereas #4** lifting the cap on university tuition fees will worsen the situation while substantial government investments in universities would make this unnecessary; and
- Whereas #5** the lack of transferability of courses and degrees between post secondary institutions as well as federal funding cuts to them have exacerbated the problem; therefore be it
- RESOLVED #1** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy:

That post secondary education be affordable to all qualified Ontarians.

- RESOLVED #2** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to:

Work with the Federal Government and other provinces and territories to develop a national post secondary education finance plan that ensures affordable post secondary education for all qualified Ontario students through:

- a) greatly increased investment in grants to low and middle income students**
- b) renewed and substantive provincial and federal investments in post secondary institutions**
- c) greater flexibility in the recognition of degrees, certificates and course credits between provinces and between universities and colleges.**

Resolution #7

MUSIC IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- Whereas #1** music was once a normal part of an elementary school day in Ontario, and to quote Pinchus Zukerman, music director of the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, “A society that neglects music education for its children does so at its peril”; and
- Whereas #2** the National Arts Centre (NAC) has developed a far-reaching program to support music education across Canada, including a ‘Vivaldi teacher resource kit’; and
- Whereas #3** Music is an effective and appealing conduit for, among other things, developing creativity, learning to solve problems, discovering the satisfaction of mastering difficulty by practice and perseverance; and
- Whereas #4** music bridges cultural differences and encourages co-operation; and
- Whereas #5** time and financial pressures have caused many boards of education to consider music a frill; and
- Whereas #6** technology can be used effectively to complement the skills of a classroom teacher in music education; and
- Whereas #7** music education in school lays the groundwork for a more satisfactory quality of life of an aging population; therefore be it
- Resolved #1** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy

a) recognize music as an aid to learning and re-instate music education into elementary school curricula

b) that Colleges of Education include a unit on basic music education for elementary school teachers

c) that School Boards be encouraged to hire qualified music teachers

d) support of programmes such as the National Arts Centre's Vivaldi teacher resource kit

e) the use of technology as an aid for music education in schools; and

Resolved #2 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to:

a) recognize music as an aid to learning and re-instate music education into elementary school curricula

b) ensure that Colleges of Education include a unit on basic music education for elementary school teachers

c) encourage Boards of Education to hire qualified music teachers

d) support programmes such as the NAC's Vivaldi teacher resource kit

e) support the use of technology as an aid for music education in schools.

Resolution #8

CHILDCARE IN SCHOOLS

- Whereas #1** childcare programs should be affordable and meet the QUAD principles of quality, universality, accessibility and developmental; and
- Whereas #2** funding for childcare should go to care and not to private profit; and
- Whereas #3** childcare in schools would provide an “integrated, responsive child care system...while supporting parents to work/study and participate in their communities”; and
- Whereas #4** licensed childcare programs provided in a variety of settings are also housed in existing schools very effectively to increase the number of spaces without using funds for new construction; and
- Whereas #5** school based childcare centres provide a “seamless day” in a child’s schooling; and
- Whereas #6** childcare centres located in schools can provide care for school-aged children to relieve working parents of worry about the child’s moving from school to another site or to a caregivers home; and
- Whereas #7** formerly space occupied by childcare centres was considered vacant space in calculating school capacity, leading to pressure to close small schools; therefore be it
- Resolved #1** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that

Where practical, schools house licensed childcare centres which are affordable and meet the QUAD principles of quality, universality, accessibility, and are developmentally appropriate

Resolved #2 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to ensure that

- a) schools in the province provide space for childcare centres which meet the QUAD principles (quality, universality, accessibility and are developmentally appropriate), and are affordable, as an investment in our children;**
- b) childcare space in schools not be included in calculating school capacity; and**
- c) any childcare funding go to care and not to private/for profit, and existing private centres be grandfathered, but no more allowed.**

Resolution #9

BILL 183, THE ADOPTION INFORMATION DISCLOSURE ACT, 2005

- Whereas #1** the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario has policy supporting open adoptions (Resolution 2005.6); and
- Whereas #2** Bill 183, passed by the Ontario legislature in November 2005, allows adopted children access to identifying information about their birth parents at age 18, and birth parents to have identifying information about children placed for adoption when the children are 19; and
- Whereas #3** Bill 183 allows either the parent or the child to register a notice that he/she does not wish to be contacted by the other person. If such notice is registered, an applicant for information must agree in writing not to attempt to contact the other person directly or indirectly before information is given; and
- Whereas #4** there is concern that women who gave up children for adoption with a promise of anonymity may not be adequately informed of this provision; and
- Whereas #5** Bill 183 makes no clear provision for search assistance or counseling around reunions, as now provided by the Children's Aid Societies; therefore be it

RESOLVED #1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy:

That safeguards and guidelines be established to ensure that

- a) the existence of the right to register a notice of unwillingness of either an adopted person or a birth parent to be contacted is well publicized**
- b) counseling around reunions and continued assistance around searches is available to those seeking such services; and**

RESOLVED #2 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario,

In connection with the implementation of Bill 183, the Adoption Information Disclosure Act, 2005, ensure that

- a) the existence of the right to register a notice of unwillingness of either an adopted person or a birth parent to be contacted is well publicized**
- b) counseling around reunions and continued assistance around searches is available to those seeking such services.**

Resolution # 10

SCHOOL FUNDRAISING

Whereas #1 more and more user fees are being charged for school trips, academic programs, and school supplies; and

Whereas #2 schools and parents are also fundraising for library books, textbooks, and other school programs and services; and

Whereas #3 the average amount of money raised in Ontario's secondary schools through fundraising and user fees is \$33,800 and the average amount raised in Ontario's elementary schools is \$11,100; and

Whereas #4 the amount of money raised this way varies from a high of \$250,000 in one school to a low of \$180 in another; and

Whereas #5 this increasing dependence on fundraising widens the gap between rich and poor schools; therefore be it

RESOLVED #1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy:

That essential school needs, as required by the official school curriculum, be funded by the Government of Ontario; and

RESOLVED #2 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to:

Ensure funding for education be sufficient to provide for all essential school needs, as required by the official school curriculum, so that schools do not need to fundraise for items such as library books, textbooks and other school programs and services.

Resolution #11

SCHOOL ADVERTISING

- Whereas #1** a survey carried out by teacher federations found that almost half of Ontario's secondary schools and over a third of Ontario's elementary schools have on-site advertising; and
- Whereas #2** over half of Ontario's secondary schools and over a quarter of its elementary schools have exclusive contracts with private corporations; and
- Whereas #3** this survey found a similar pattern in all other provinces except Quebec where such advertising is prohibited; and
- Whereas #4** a leading manufacturer said, "The school system is where you build brand loyalty" therefore be it
- RESOLVED #1** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy:
- That the marketing of commercial products or services to students in publicly supported schools be prohibited.**
- RESOLVED #2** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to:
- Ensure that the marketing of commercial products or services to students in publicly supported schools be prohibited.**

Resolution #12

**PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN ON
AND OFF RESERVE**

Whereas #1 in 1978, the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) urged the Government of Ontario to support aboriginal women in their efforts to obtain equal rights under the Indian Act; and

Whereas #2 in Kelowna, B.C. in November 2005, the Government of Canada and first ministers, including the Premier of Ontario, agreed to immediate targets, time frames and funding to improve aboriginal lives; and

Whereas #3 these negotiations did not address violence against aboriginal women; and

Whereas #4 attacks on aboriginal women in Canadian cities have, for too long, been treated as isolated cases. Despite a growing number of incidents of missing and murdered aboriginal women, many of the critical preventive measures identified by past government commissions and enquiries have not been implemented; therefore be it

RESOLVED #1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy

Support for the rights and safety of aboriginal women and girls on and off reserves.

RESOLVED #2 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to :

Work closely with aboriginal Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and aboriginal women in particular, to institute plans of action that include:

a) the development of appropriate and effective protocols for police

response to missing persons cases consistent with the specific risks to aboriginal women and girls

b) clear instructions to police to ensure that the fundamental rights of women involved in the sex trade are protected in all law enforcement activities

c) adequate sustained, multi-year funding to culturally appropriate services, such as shelters/safe houses and counseling for aboriginal women and girls on and off reserve, needed to prevent violence

d) urging the federal government to i) hasten the passing of Bill S-45, an Act to Change the Human Rights Act so that all aboriginal people are given anti-discrimination protection afforded by the Canadian Human Rights Act, and (ii) ratify the Inter American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women.

EMERGING AND CURRENT ISSUES

HEALTH

This year the Council emphasized one area of health care provision in its resolution on Older Women's Breast and Gynaecological Health.

Members of the Council continue to monitor developments in the provision of Health Care Services at local, provincial and national levels. In Ontario we are closely monitoring the development of the Local Health Integrated Networks (LHIN) and the consequences for service delivery in our respective regions. We continue to raise concerns that the LHIN model may further the opportunities to privatize the health care system.

The Provincial Council has also corresponded with the Minister of Health about concerns that the P3 model of capital funding for health care facilities is short sighted as it shifts the burden of cost to future generations of Ontario Citizens while giving excess profit and control to private entrepreneurs who are investing in hospital buildings.

As well the Council urges the Government to remove the Health Tax burden.

ENVIRONMENT

Energy Future

For many years, Provincial Council of Women policies have consistently supported a combination of renewable, non pollutant, sources of energy, as the best way to protect the environment and the health and safety of the citizens of Ontario.

Although we are disappointed that the time line for the phase-out of the very pollutant coal-fired plants has been lengthened considerably, we are pleased that modest steps are being taken by the Government to encourage energy sources and programs that reflect our policies e.g. through the Energy Conservation and Responsibility Act and the use of Standard Offer contracts.

We are most disturbed however, that the Government has chosen to embrace dangerous, exorbitantly expensive, unreliable and inefficient nuclear power to provide over 30% of our electricity needs over the next 25 years, at a cost of over \$40 billion. This action was taken without extensive and open public discourse, and based on the Ontario Power Authority's (OPA) less than adequate background information and a flawed and strictly controlled public consultation. Despite the overwhelming opposition of environmental groups, the evidence from reliable studies, and even visits and advice from energy experts, from such energy efficient jurisdictions as California, nuclear power was chosen.

It is also of grave concern that the Government refuses to allow for a complete environmental assessment. Instead, it has directed the OPA to plan for individual plant assessments under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) regulations, which are far

from adequate at present. This has allowed for the OPA and the private sector lessee Bruce Power to quickly begin to move their plans for new nuclear plants through the CNSC regulatory approval process, separate from the Government's final approval of a Provincial electricity plan for the future. PCWO finds this a less than precautionary approach.

PCWO urges the Ministry of Energy to move more expeditiously to close coal-fired plants, become much more aggressive in its energy conservation targets, and strengthen the Energy Conservation Act 2005. Most importantly, we urgently request that the Government halt its plans to assess each nuclear plant individually, and instead protect the public and the environment through a full scale Environmental Assessment for the final electricity plan.

Disposal of Medium and Low Level Nuclear Wastes May Contaminate Great Lakes

Bruce Power is also planning to build a deep underground dump for low and medium level nuclear waste at its site, just one kilometer from the shores of Lake Huron. The potential for radiological contamination of the Great Lakes by Canadian nuclear facilities has already been recognized as a cause for concern by the International Joint Commission on the Great Lakes. In our 2005 Annual Brief to the government and in a subsequent letter to the Ministry of Natural Resources, PCWO commended the Ministry of Natural Resources for its leadership role in protecting the Great Lakes through the Annex 21 Agreements. We would hope the Ministry of Natural Resources, backed by the Ministry of Environment would ensure that such a dump is not built near Lake Huron. We also are concerned that building a dump deep underground will set a precedent and influence the federal discussions around the disposal of high level nuclear waste deep underground.

Incineration Technologies and the EA

PCWO remains committed to strong waste programs and high diversion targets as the most responsible course of action for Ontario municipalities, and we commend the Government for its plan to legislate a deposit return on LCBO bottles. However, we continue to support a deposit return on other beverage containers, as is done in many other provinces.

We are most concerned however, that the recent agreement made by the Ministry of Environment with the State of Michigan to phase out the dumping of municipal waste by 2010, is giving licence to waste management consultants and proponents of incineration to push municipalities into the use of so called "new technologies" - some of which, such as gasification, are just in their pilot stages and not yet commercially viable for municipal waste. New incinerators emit very fine particulate matter that goes deep into the lungs, and while emitting less pollutants than earlier versions, they are responsible for unacceptable levels of very dangerous toxic pollutants such as mercury and cadmium that can travel considerable distances to pollute air, water and soil and enter the food chain.

The Ministry's recent approval of an out-dated application for an incinerator in Durham York, and its recently proposed, less restrictive, Regulatory Amendments to Facilitate Waste Recycling, Use of Alternative Fuels and New and Emerging Waste Management Technologies

(the latter to include pilot energy-from-waste incinerator projects), will certainly give encouragement to incineration proponents. PCWO is also concerned that new draft regulations for energy-from-waste projects will allow the industry to self-regulate. Given the concerns of some scientists, most environmental groups, and many in the general public, PCWO urges the Ministry to ensure that all applications for municipal waste incinerators, using new or old technologies, be subject to complete Environmental Assessment hearings.

Protection of Farmland and Environmentally Sensitive Areas

PCWO commends the Government for several measures it has taken to bolster the Greenbelt Act, such as the enactment of Bill 16 and the use of conservation easements to protect the Duffins Rouge Park in Pickering in “perpetuity.” These are complimentary measures to ensure very long term protection regardless of any change in government policies. We reiterate our last year’s request that the same kind of protection be given the irreplaceable Niagara fruit lands.

Council also is pleased that the 2006 Places to Grow Plan and the accompanying Infrastructure Renewal Act prohibit rural estate development in forests. Nevertheless the Plan should be much stronger, as it allows for enormous growth in the GTA area outside the Greenbelt lands; will not halt new highways that could destroy parts of the Niagara Escarpment, and cut through prime farmlands; and, unlike an earlier draft, it has less protective policies for prime farmland and forests than the Provincial Policy Statement and the Planning Act. This appears to be a plan and legislation to promote growth; and already planners, developers and politicians are planning to develop huge swaths of prime food land and environmentally sensitive areas that should be protected for future generations. We urge the Government to enforce the few restrictions in the Plan and to consider strengthening it in the near future.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Inadequacy of Social Assistance

Provincial Council of Women of Ontario commends the government for its continuing work to remove barriers to independence for those receiving social assistance e.g. the extended retention of a health card for those leaving Ontario Works for employment. Nevertheless, the underlying and most destructive barrier to the quality of life for families and individuals receiving assistance remains the unacceptably low rates of assistance. Social service and non-profit advocacy sectors and local governments across the province have repeatedly drawn the Government’s attention to the difficulties that people face when welfare rates are so clearly inadequate.

For instance, many recipients lack basic necessities and parents must chose between rent and food. Some children go hungry and are moved from one home/school to another as parents search for affordable housing; and some are excluded from social and educational activities that others take for granted e.g. school trips, sports. PCWO joins these many Ontarians in

urging the Government to ensure that the social assistance rates meet the real needs of those receiving this help, thus ensuring a necessary improvement in their quality of life and health, and a better future for themselves and their children.

Child Tax Benefit Supplement Clawback

PCWO also commends the Government for its intent to allow families to retain the new Federal Child Care payment, but we again urge the Government to cease the clawback of the Federal Child Tax Benefit Supplement. While a recently proposed new child tax benefit, separate from the adult/family benefit, may, over the longer term, allow for adequacy of family income, this may take many years to come into being. Separating the child from the family unit could also lead to a more punitive attitude and policy for the remaining adults in the unit, somewhat like those which allow for unacceptably meager shelter and basic benefits paid to single employables.

Living Wages

PCWO has often urged the Government to increase the minimum wage to a “living wage”, and while we commend you for the increases to date, the first in many years, it is clear that many thousands of Ontarians cannot get by on the current minimum wage. Some must take on more than one job just to earn incomes that are still well below the national average. Studies show that a gradual increase of wages will not result in job losses, and any increases will go directly into local economies for food, shelter and other necessities, improve personal and family quality of life, and build healthier communities. PCWO urges you once more to immediately increase the minimum wage to \$10 per hour, and to tie further increases to the rate of inflation.

Clawback of Earnings

Council notes that the recent changes to a 50% clawback of earned income from Ontario Works, and most recently ODSP, have simplified the process. However, recent research appears to show that very few benefit financially from this change, and many receive less money. While this equates to just a few more hours to be worked to make up the difference, these extra hours can be difficult to obtain for some, particularly those with mental and physical health challenges. We urge the Ministry to study this issue and consider the costs and benefits to recipients as well as the barriers to employment this rule may create.

PCWO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Milica Kovacevich, MA, BES

Milica was elected President of PCWO in 2003 after having been an active member in the St. Catharines and District Council of Women for many years. Ms. Kovacevich has an undergraduate degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Waterloo; her Master of Arts in Social Welfare Policy from McMaster University and in 2002 attended the Harvard Business School Executive Education Program in Performance Measurement and Effective Management of Non-Profit Organizations. She is active Rotarian and volunteers in her community of St. Catharines. She has worked in the non-profit sector for over 20 years in senior management and in government for 5 years.

Treasurer: Mary Potter

Mary has her Bachelor of Household Science and has spent most of her life volunteering. She is a Past-President of the Social Planning and Research Council of St. Catharines & Thorold, the St. Catharines and District Council of Women and the Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park. In the National Council of Women of Canada she has been a Vice-President, Constitution Convener and is currently Resolutions Convener. She is currently Treasurer of the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario. Mary is also a member of several naturalist groups in the Niagara Region having served as membership secretary for the Peninsula Field Naturalists.

Secretary: Margaret Jennings

Ms. Jennings is a retired teacher having taught in Nova Scotia and Windsor, Ontario. She is currently President of the Windsor Council of Women and active member of the Anglican Church, Beta Sigma Phi Sorority, Essex County Field Naturalists and Retired Women Teachers Association.

Vice President Resolutions: Luba Podolsky

Luba Podolsky had a B.A. from McMaster University and her M.Ed. from the University of Ottawa. Her work experience includes Microbiology at St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton and Laboratory of Hygiene in Ottawa. She has also taught secondary school science (mainly biology) in Ottawa. Her volunteer activities include the Research Institute of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in genetic research. As well, she is an active volunteer in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and Council of Women at the local and provincial levels. Luba has held various positions including V.P. Education, Health and Resolutions at PCWO. She participates in the Health and Social Welfare Committees of Ottawa Council of Women, and is the representative from Ottawa Council of Women to the Community Advisory Committee of The Ottawa Hospital.

Vice President Environment: Gracia Janes

Ms. Janes is a former teacher and School Board Trustee. Ms. Janes helped found the fruit-land preservation movement in Ontario in 1976 and continues to be a driving force in the Niagara-based Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society. She has chaired the Niagara Social Assistance Advisory Committee since 1988, and the Regional Niagara Community Services Department Social Assistance Advisory Committee since 1999. She is a member of the Regional Niagara Municipality of Quality Council and the Regional Niagara Chair's Agricultural Task Force. Gracia has served on the Board of Directors at all levels of Council of Women, and was the PCWO President from 1999 to 2002. She is the recipient of the Ontario Medal for Citizenship, the Canada 125 Medal, the Queens Golden Jubilee Medal, and the YWCA Women of Distinction Award.

Vice President Health: Beverlee McIntosh

Beverlee McIntosh is the Chair of the Health Committee of the Ottawa Council of Women. She holds a Masters degree in Social Work and has worked in hospital and mental health settings for over 20 years. Beverlee presently works at the Rehabilitation Centre of the Ottawa Hospital. She is an active member of the Ontario Association of Social Workers (Gerontology Advisory) and the Canadian Coalition of Caregivers and has a strong interest in advocacy, especially in the area of Health Services for Seniors and support for their family caregivers.

Vice President Seniors and Housing: Thelma McGillivray

Ms McGillivray has a BA in Political Science, BSW, McMaster University, MSW (Social Work) Wilfrid Laurier University, and Certification in Mediation, from the University of Toronto. Thelma has worked for C.A.S., Mental Health Services, Unified Family Court, and Private Family Practice. Thelma has had 30 years experience in various local community, provincial and national organizations. As a member of Council of Women Thelma has been active at all levels and currently is the President of the Hamilton Council of Women. As well, she is the Past Board member of Elizabeth Fry Society; Past President of CFUW, Burlington Chapter; Past Chair, Status of Women for City of Hamilton; Present Board member of Ontario Coalition of Senior Organizations Ontario (OCSO); Past President of the Older Women's Network and Present Board member of the New Horizons Review Committee for Ontario. Thelma has received the Woman of the Year in Communications, from the City of Hamilton and the Mayor of Hamilton's Award for Volunteerism.

Vice President Status of Women and Education: Kelly Schwab

Currently Ms Schwab is the Executive Director of the Windsor Women's Incentive Centre; a not-for-profit organization working for reform in the area of women's issues. She is a graduate from St. Clair College with diplomas in Microcomputer Applications and in Bookkeeping and Payroll Accreditation. She has used these skills to assist other charitable organizations as well as a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity.

Vice President Media: Dr. Yvonne Bogorya-Buczowski

Dr. Bogorya-Buczowski received her PhD in Strategic Management and has been teaching management subjects for over 15 years. She is a member of the board and Past President of the Polish Canadian Women's Federation. Last year she was Director of the Canada Ethno-Cultural Council. Dr. Bogorya-Buczowski is the National Council of Women of Canada's representative on the CNE Board of Directors. She has been active in the Toronto community for the past 20 years and received for her service the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal and Provincial Volunteer Award.

Vice President Economics: May Toth

Ms Toth received her initial training in nursing-midwife from Scotland. She then pursued further education and received a Bachelor in Nursing from Queens' University and a Masters Degree in Nurse Sciences from Boston University. As well May has received additional Certificates from Emergency Management Ontario in both General and Education. She has been involved at the teaching level at McMaster University and in nursing schools in Kingston and Toronto and, for many years involved in nursing administration. May is active in her community of Hamilton in the areas of environment and multiculturalism.

Vice President Communications: Shirley Browne

Ms. Browne graduated with her teaching credentials from England. Ms. Browne has travelled extensively living in England, Jamaica, Burundi, Togo, Quebec and has settled in Ottawa. Throughout her travels Shirley has been actively involved in those communities in a professional capacity as a teacher and/or involved in theatre. Shirley is an active member of Council of Women at all three levels and has been the President of the Ottawa and Provincial Councils of Women. In addition, Shirley is active in her community as a member of the Board of the James St. Rehabilitation Centre for Addicted Teenagers, a volunteer at House Mother, Chair of the Centretown Churches Social Action Committee and Chair of St Barnabas Outreach Committee which has been working with several Rwandan 'refugee' families in Canada, Africa and Holland trying to improve their status with refugee boards and immigration departments and raising money for their basic needs.

Past President: Jacqueline Truax

Ms. Truax is a graduate of Seneca College and was an ECE teacher for 16 years and is currently retired. Active with her church, Ms Truax currently volunteers her time assisting seniors. Ms. Truax is a Past President of the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario and is responsible for PCWO Archives. Jacqueline has been active as a member of the Toronto Council of Women for the past 20 years serving as a director and on various committees.