

2015 PCWO RESOLUTIONS

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2015.01

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Whereas #1 one of the purposes of the Ontario Endangered Species Act is “to protect species that are at risk and their habitats, and to the recovery of species that are at risk”; and

Whereas #2 several recent changes to the legislation undermine the purpose of the legislation; and

Whereas #3 regulation now exempts proponents of many activities from the requirement to have a permit before they harm endangered species or their habitats; and

Whereas #4 vague and confusing language undermines public participation in government decision-making with respect to the environment; therefore be it

Resolved #1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that endangered species and their habitats be protected and their recovery be promoted as approved in the 2007 Ontario Endangered Species Act; and be it further

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

- a. Ensure that the original purpose of the Endangered Species Act is enforced, i. e., protect species that are at risk and their habitat, and promote their recovery;
- b. Promote public participation in decisions by using clear language.

2015.02

ENHANCED POWERS FOR ONTARIO’S CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE

Whereas #1 the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth is responsible to ensure that children and youth in care know and understand their rights and that the laws protecting children from abuse or harsh treatment are enforced; and

Whereas #2 Bill 8, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, will enhance the ability of the Advocate’s Office to hold child welfare authorities to account, but does not allow the office to investigate concerns of children outside the children’s aid society; and

Whereas #3 there is no whistle blower protection for those contacting the Advocate’s Office; and

Whereas #4 the Advocate is not able to require services, governments, institutions and agencies to produce information required to investigate complaints; and

Whereas #5 the Ontario Advocate's office is the only one in Canada with restricted access to information concerning incidents involving serious harm or death to children in its mandate; therefore be it

Resolved #1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) adopt as policy that Ontario's Child and Youth Advocate be authorized to investigate concerns of children in all areas of its mandate; and be it further

Resolved #2 that PCWO urge the Government of Ontario to:

- a. Empower the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth to investigate concerns of children in any area of its mandate, not just in the case of children's aid societies;
- b. Ensure whistle blower protection for those raising a concern to the Advocate's office about the safety of a young person;
- c. Enable the Advocate's Office to easily obtain any information it needs pertaining to the case in order to advocate for children and youth;
- d. Require that police, children's aid societies, school authorities and other mandated professionals report to the advocate's office within 24 hours any incident involving serious harm to or death of any child in Ontario.

2015.03

MANDATORY FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION

Whereas # 1 nearly one-third of children and youth in Canada are overweight or obese – conditions that can result in increased risk of chronic disease such as Type II diabetes and cardiovascular disease; and

Whereas # 2 the Ontario government set a goal in 2012 to reduce childhood obesity by 20% over five years; and

Whereas # 3 there are gaps and deficits in Canadians' knowledge and skills related to food and nutrition; and

Whereas # 4 seven of the twenty new and revised Family Studies courses released by the

Ontario Ministry of Education in 2013 are food and nutrition- related but none are mandatory; therefore be it

Resolved # 1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that Family Studies Food and Nutrition- related courses be prioritized in the Ontario curriculum; and be it further

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

- a. Make at least one Food and Nutrition course mandatory for all students to receive an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.
- b. Make food and nutrition education a focus in all grades.

2015.01PU CESSATION OF THE USE OF SEGREGATION IN ONTARIO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Whereas #1 in 2012, the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urged the Government of Ontario to improve conditions in Ontario Correctional Institutions without delay by:

- a) Following the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules (UNSMR) for the Treatment of Prisoners and implementing the recommendations of respected Canadian bodies, including the Attorney General of Ontario, the John Howard Society and the Canadian Mental Health Association;
- b) Reducing the need for overcrowding, and using programming and treatment based on credible research that reinforces the mandate of the Ministry of Corrections and addresses the crime-reducing potential of the program
- c) Ensuring that the physical and mental health needs of all inmates are met expeditiously in both jails and detention centres;
- d) Working towards building smaller local prisons with the aim of closing super jails in the near future; and

Whereas #2 segregation of inmates over undue lengths of time is being used as a disciplinary tool in Ontario's correctional institutions and increased over- crowding of these facilities will only exacerbate the situation; and

Whereas #3 the World Health Organization considers segregation, which isolates and

Dehumanizes a person, to be a form of torture and many jurisdictions are moving away from its use; and

Whereas #4 persons with mental health challenges are particularly at risk, and although there is a 100 bed secure facility for men the Provincial Ministry of Correctional Services is only recently planning to study the need for such a facility for women; therefore be it

Resolved #1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that segregation of inmates not be used as a disciplinary tool in Ontario correctional institutions and that there be adequate secure facilities for persons with mental health challenges; and

Resolved #2 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the government of Ontario to cease using segregation as a disciplinary method in correctional institutions and that they act immediately to ensure a secure facility for female inmates with mental health issues.

2015.02PU DENTICARE

Whereas #1 in 2008 the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urged the Government of Ontario to initiate a dental program so that all low income persons may receive preventive and remedial dental care; and

Whereas # 2 more than 2.3 million Ontarians cannot afford dental care and lack of access to preventive and remedial dental health care causes further deterioration of oral health, pain and suffering and long term health problems, as well as making it difficult to get and hold a job and interact socially; and

Whereas #3 low income seniors without dental insurance plans are particularly vulnerable as the services provided in free dental clinics are mainly for children and there are very long wait times at all clinics; and

Whereas #4 dental care service for adults receiving social assistance through Ontario Works is authorized by municipal social service departments on a discretionary basis and municipal governments determine how much funding will be available, making this care not equally accessible province-wide; and

Whereas #5 the Government of Ontario has promised to extend public dental programs to low income adults and seniors, but this is not to happen until 2025; therefore be it

Resolved # 1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that public dental programs be provided to all low income adults, including low income seniors and that preventative and remedial dental services for social assistance recipients be mandatory; and

Resolved #2 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to immediately expand public dental programs to all low income adults including low income seniors, and to make current preventative and remedial dental services for social assistance recipients mandatory.

2015.03PU

EXPOSURE TO ASBESTOS – A HEALTH HAZARD

Whereas #1 in 1992 the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urged the Government of Ontario to a) review asbestos regulations b) lower exposure limits c) license contractors for safe removal and disposal of asbestos d) ensure strict enforcement of any standards which are set e) require aggressive air monitoring tests and follow-up procedures for the renovation or the demolition of buildings with asbestos insulation; and

Whereas #2 over 3 decades later, although the Government of Ontario has brought in stricter regulations for exposure to asbestos, many thousands of Ontarians have suffered and died from the effects of direct, secondary contact with asbestos, or asbestos residue, and the World Health Organization has declared that no level of exposure to asbestos is acceptable; and

Whereas #3 while Ontario has required that asbestos must be removed from existing buildings where there is a possibility of public exposure, asbestos is still allowed to be used in construction materials; and

Whereas #4 a significant factor in the incidence of asbestos related illness is the importation, use and repair of car brake pads containing asbestos; therefore be it

Resolved #1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as further policy that products containing asbestos not be allowed in the construction or renovation of buildings or for other public uses; and

Resolved #2 the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to enact legislation to ban use of construction materials and all other products that contain asbestos.