

**Dr. Kevin Caruso
Sault Ste. Marie,
Ontario**

**The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie
99 Foster Drive
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario
P6A 5X6**

September 21, 2025

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Kevin Caruso, and I am a resident of Sault Ste. Marie, living at [redacted]. I have resided here since 2003. I am writing to express my concerns and thoughts regarding the proposed solar project on the shoreline of the upper St. Mary's river.

I was made aware of this only two days ago which is very concerning considering the plan has been in place for several years and carries a massive environment impact.

As you might imagine, the clear cutting of an old growth forest which is home to a plethora of species has many people concerned and puzzled. The mature trees in this area are 250-300 years old! [One does not cut such a forest to build solar farms]

In a brief letter with little time before tomorrow's meeting, I can only scratch the surface of the environmental consequences. There is much to consider: flora, fauna, aquifer contamination, migratory routes, and endangered species.

For example, this forest serves as a critical wintering yard for the remaining deer herd that travelled between Goulais Bay and the upper St. Mary's river for hundreds of years. When the airport was built, the migratory route and wintering yards were squeezed into that remaining forest. In fact, in the 80's the herd would have been lost if not for the efforts of Mr. George Matejic "God rest his soul". The destruction of this remaining forest would prevent the deer from moving freely, finding mates, and accessing critical food and water sources. In addition, infrastructure such as fences around the solar farm would further impede animal movement.

Apart from this wonderful deer herd, you will regularly see the other inhabitants in these woods:

- a bull and cow moose that had twin calves this spring
- two breeding pairs of black bear, both with cubs this spring
- one pack of 4-6 timber wolves that moves between Marshall Drive and Des Chenes Drive depending on snow volume, food supply and coyote numbers

- the coyote pack is very large and healthy in this wooded area - wildlife workers east of Sault Ste. Marie rarely encounter coyotes without mange (this a terrible and sad disease), but the pack on Des Chenes Drive is completely clear of mange - these coyotes are so large and majestic that they can be mistaken for timber wolves
- turkeys! Which are newcomers to the area - one hen in particular that had 6 poults which successfully survived (there are numerous red fox families and dens in these woods)
- the undergrowth of this wooded area is teeming with small mammals - far too many species to introduce at this time, and some at risk already

Clearing these trees and vegetation will directly remove natural habitat, displace the animals dependent on this forest for food and shelter, and disrupt local biodiversity [One does not cut such a forest to build solar farms]

Also, consider the increase in animal/vehicle collisions when that 1000 acre parcel is destroyed. After hundreds of years in a location, those herds and packs do not move overnight. They will do everything they can to survive in the area they have always occupied. If we think there are a lot of nuisance bear calls to the MNR now, imagine the scene after those woods are eliminated.

Perhaps most alarming is the threat to several endangered and at risk species including: the Canada Warbler, the Common Nighthawk, the Olive-sided Flycatcher, the Rusty Blackbird, the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly, the Blanding's Turtle, the Little Brown Myotis (little brown bat), and the Monarch Butterfly. [Again, one does not cut such a forest to build solar farms]

The habitats in the larger Sault Ste. Marie area, including the sand dunes, beaches and wetlands at Pointe Des Chenes, provide critical resources for various species. However, invasive species, habitat loss, and climate change pose ongoing threats to the regional biodiversity. Conservation efforts focusing on preserving and restoring these natural areas are crucial for the long-term survival of the local species at risk.

And it is not only the land that is affected with such a clear cut. As this site rests on the shoreline area of Eastern Lake Superior/ Upper St. Mary's River there is a threat to the water; actually the ground water, the well-water and the lake water itself. Besides humans dependent on this well-water, the species most at risk is the Lake Sturgeon (also an officially threatened species); known in Ojibway as Doodem, this ancient piscis is not just a fish. It is an ancient relative, a law-keeper, a teacher and a sustainer to the people. To know the sturgeon is to remember patience, wisdom, and responsibility to future generations. I

have an underwater video of an amazing 6 foot sturgeon swimming slowly by, just offshore from the proposed clear cut. Interestingly, the sturgeon has a very strong relationship with the trees. Tradition describes the bond between the trees and the fish; between the ancient pines of the forest and the ancient Sturgeon. Very old pine trees hold significant cultural and spiritual importance in Anishnaabe culture. The White Pine, in particular, is revered as a symbol of wisdom, longevity, peace, and unity. It is considered an ancient teacher and an esteemed elder among the trees, embodying virtues such as leadership and resilience. The Ojibwe of the Great Lakes region regard these trees not merely as objects but as living entities or "persons" with standing and spiritual presence.

Besides the ancient trees species in this area my Mashkikiwinini points out important species such as the Lady Slipper (Makasin Waabiqwaan), the Trillium, Princess Pine (Cinonagan), Wild Blueberries (Miinan) and Wild Raisins.

{for allowing me to share these teachings I thank you
gikinoo'amaagewinini, Ren, Chi Miigwetch}

Again, there is just too much to table with just a day's notice...

It is my understanding that the City Council plays a crucial role in addressing community concerns, and I am hopeful that my input will be considered in your decision-making process.

I appreciate your dedication to serving our community and am confident that, with your thoughtful consideration, we can work towards a positive resolution.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I look forward to hearing from you and appreciate your continued service to our community.

Sincerely,
Kevin Caruso

