

Dear Pooi-Leng Wong:

I wish to add my name to the list of people petitioning for the designation of the American Eel as a Species at Risk.

I am a 93 year old Algonquin of the Ottawa River Watershed, and I currently also serve as Honorary Chair on the Ottawa River Heritage Designation Committee. I have been deeply concerned with the devastating transformation of this watershed and areas beyond throughout the course of my lifetime, and I have been increasingly actively engaged in efforts to promote respect for Mother Earth and all that inhabit her, over the past twenty years. This effort was in part recognized by the Canadian Heritage Rivers System, when, in 2004, I was presented with the Bill Mason Conservation Award.

Over the past ten years, I have also been involved in developing an integrated vision for an international environmentally focused healing and peace building centre at the sacred meeting place of my ancestors, Asinabka, site of the Chaudière Falls in Ottawa, a centre to advance respect for Mother Earth, Indigenous Peoples and all others, and in my mind, these are interrelated matters of grave concern for the world. Last November, I organized a Water Life Workshop, in part to advance this effort, but also to encourage better stewardship of the Ottawa River. This led me to an effort to dissuade Domtar Inc. from expanding the Hydro Electric Plant at the Chaudière Falls. Amongst other concerns, I have been upset by evidence of the destructive impact of turbines on eels in some graphic photographs.

I believe it is crucial importance that we all reexamine our invasive and destructive relationship with Mother Earth and all her creatures, and many are beginning to hear this cry. Every day, it seems we hear of the desperate state of yet another species, and the current focus on sharks highlights the interrelated ramifications of the destruction of individual species.

At this point I am raising my voice concerning the plight of the American Eel. The eel has been of spiritual, nutritional and material importance to the Indigenous Peoples of the eastern seaboard, and to my ancestors of the Ottawa River Watershed, since time immemorial, has played a role in the Donald Marshall Junior struggle for the recognition of indigenous fishing rights, and I believe eel spirit is intrinsic to the sacred Seven Fire Prophecy Wampum Belt that I have carried for the people for over thirty six years. It is this prophecy that tells us that humanity is now at a

cross roads, and that we need to regenerate our relationship with Mother Earth and each other, and it is a message I delivered at the December 2006 Minster's Round Table on Species at Risk; a short few months later, we all alert to the issues of global environmental and human crisis.

I am taking the liberty of attaching a paper prepared by Archeologist Bill Allen, who is currently undertaking studies in support of my effort to advance a vision for the Chaudière site, for a more specific review of critical concerns on this matter.

I look forward to being apprised of development on this file.

Sincerely,

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Algonquin Elder  
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