



April 19, 2010

Report recommending signing the Countdown 2010 Declaration (Save Biodiversity) CDC

Good evening Chairman and members of the Committee

My name is Dianne Watkins and I sit on the Board of Directors for BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association. I coordinate BurlingtonGreen's biodiversity programme, including our partnership in the Countdown 2010 Declaration to Save Biodiversity.

I am speaking tonight in support of Mayor Jackson's recommendation that the City of Burlington partner with the Countdown 2010 Declaration to save biodiversity, and undertake a series of associated commitments. Governments worldwide, including Canada, have promised to save biodiversity by 2010. Countdown 2010 helps its international partners move from words to action.

I am pleased to note the eight commitments currently proposed for the City of Burlington's Declaration. I would like to voice strong support for the Sustainable Development Committee's additional proposed Declaration commitment items, submitted in the SDC's March 21, 2010 memo to the Community Development Committee (Appendix C). A number of the SDC's excellent recommendations connect specifically with key priority areas requiring action, as listed in the BurlingtonGreen memo of March 1, 2010 (Appendix B). (It was noted that some excellent work in which the City of Burlington had participated, namely the Cootes to Escarpment Plan, was not mentioned in the Mayor's Office report or the SDC document. It was suggested that if there was anything relevant to that plan on the City's agenda for the coming year, that it deserved to be recognized on any forthcoming Declaration made by the City of Burlington).

(Also as an aside related to an earlier Council comment on Garlic Mustard, and not specifically relevant to the current delegation, it was confirmed that BurlingtonGreen was ready to take action, in particular at LaSalle Park, provided that protocol specific arrangements could be made, including mulch drop off etc).

I'd also like to suggest that the proposed public awareness event for International Biodiversity Day on Saturday May 22, 2010 might be explicitly mentioned in the City's proposed Declaration commitments. Regarding proposed Biodiversity Day events, I would like to make note here of three relevant initiatives for the Committee's consideration.

**The Green Wave** <http://greenwave.cbd.int/> tree planting and awareness initiative, coordinated by the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat's Office in Montreal Quebec. (Canada is host to the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity). I strongly

encourage the City of Burlington to register any May 22 native tree plantings with this international project.

The Ontario **Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network's**

<http://www.biodiversityeducation.ca> province wide coordination of and support for local action on International Biodiversity Day, in keeping with the 2010 theme of Biodiversity, Development, and Poverty Alleviation, with a particular focus on:

- community development
- First Nations
- business/industry
- renewable resources (agriculture, fisheries, forestry, horticulture)

Lastly, the theme for 2010 International Year of Biological Diversity highlights Poverty Alleviation in support of Biodiversity. Ontario's First Nations people (and here I'm referring back to one of the themes suggested by the Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network) living in remote communities experience third world living conditions with severely limited access to community services such as food banks (we're talking about fly-in communities). Indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices are recognized under the Convention on Biological Diversity for their important contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. The **North South Partnership for Children** <http://www.northsouthpartnership.com> connects affluent communities in Southern Ontario with isolated First Nations communities in Northwest Ontario. The City of Burlington may wish to investigate opportunities to participate in the North South Partnership for Children as part of its 2010 activities in support of biodiversity.

In closing I would like to re-iterate, on behalf of BurlingtonGreen, my strong support for the Mayor's recommendation that the City of Burlington celebrate the International Year of Biological Diversity by developing and signing its own Countdown 2010 Declaration to Save Biodiversity. Thank you!

Dianne Watkins

Board of Directors

BurlingtonGreen