

Ministre
de l'Énergie, des Mines et des Ressources



CANADA
L'honorable The Honourable

Minister
of Energy, Mines and Resources

Marcel Masse

May 30, 1988

Alan Levy
219 Lippincott Street
Toronto
Ontario
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Dear friend :

It was a pleasure for me, on a recent trip to Toronto, to spend time visiting Ecology House, an environmental and energy information center located in the heart of the city. Through various program displays, a book store and other services, the staff at Ecology House has for ten years made an invaluable contribution to public awareness about environmental issues and energy conservation.

Ecology House is unique to Toronto, but the issues with which it is concerned are not particular to one city or one nation. As the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Bruntland Commission) confirmed, the idea that all nations share a "common future" is not merely a statement of goodwill but a question of survival. The ramifications of environmental disasters such as the shrinkage of forests, expansion of deserts, erosion of soil, depletion of ozone and the rise in the temperature of the planet do not respect national boundaries or natural barriers.

Our understanding of the relationship between the environment, the economy and energy development is still growing. I have been acutely aware of the need to hasten the integration of environmental considerations into decision-making. Our approach has several dimensions. We want to use our strength as a scientific department to better understand how to care for the environment. We want to work closely with industry and the provinces to enhance environmental quality and we want to make sure that striving for that quality is factored into decisions we take ourselves.

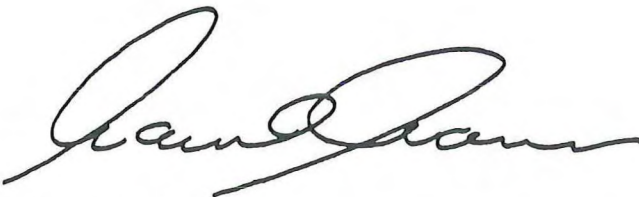
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Consequently, in specific situations, it may be advisable not to proceed with development until better information is available. A case in point is Georges Bank, a fishery off the coast of Nova Scotia that provides a way of life for the people of Lunenburg, Shelburne, Digby and Yarmouth counties. Recently, I announced a moratorium until at least the year 2000 on exploratory drilling in the area, during which time an Environmental Assessment Review Panel will hold public hearings on the possible impact of petroleum activity on the Bank. I have also written to the Honourable Donald P. Hodel, Secretary of the Interior for the United States, concerning American leases for drilling that lie outside the area covered by the moratorium but adjacent to the Bank. I have pointed out the potentially grave consequences that could result from any mishap, and urged that all drilling be suspended until the questions of environmental safeguards and compensation have been resolved.

Public support for changes in the way we manage energy growth will depend on public education and that is why I took great satisfaction in revisiting Ecology House on May 25th to make an announcement. The ownership of the House will be transferred from my department to Pollution Probe, taking into account both the extensive renovations already undertaken by Ecology House, its staff and volunteer workers, and the outstanding public service it has provided since it opened its doors in 1978.

I am confident that the importance of Ecology House to the City of Toronto, as a symbol for all of Canada, will continue to grow for many years to come.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Marcel Masse', with a large, stylized loop at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Marcel Masse