



1970 - 2020!

CELEBRATING

50 YEARS

OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

CELA has been at the forefront in making our environment cleaner, healthier and safer for everyone! CELA helped develop Ontario's *Environmental Bill of Rights* and better chemical regulation laws in Canada. We were instrumental in getting lead out of gasoline, banning asbestos, and achieving widespread bans and restrictions on the cosmetic use of pesticides.

There is so much more to celebrate, including the additional milestone of 40 years as an Ontario Legal Aid Specialty Clinic. We look forward to our next 50 years of helping low-income and vulnerable clients and citizens' groups participate in environmental decision-making and improve the environmental health of their communities, as our work is not finished!

CELA TURNS 50 IN 2020

- ✓ Please send your best memories and photos of our environmental law heritage for our upcoming exhibit to our office manager Tracy Tucker at tracy@cela.ca.
- ✓ Sign up for our monthly e-bulletin for more updates at cela.ca/signup.

HIGHLIGHTING 50 YEARS OF CLIENT REPRESENTATION

CELA lawyers have represented thousands of clients in cases large and small. In so doing, we have shaped the jurisprudence of environmental law, including some of its most important precedents:

HUDSON, QUEBEC - Intervention at the Supreme Court of Canada to support municipal rights to protect citizens' health from needless pesticide use. This decision enabled a sea change in lawn and garden care across Canada, reducing some immediate sources of pesticide exposure.

ONCOMOUSE - Intervention at the Federal Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada. This decision denied the ability of anyone to patent mammals and other higher life forms as products under *Canada's Patent Act*.

WALKERTON INQUIRY - Representation of the Concerned Walkerton Citizens to advocate for a multi-barrier approach to protecting drinking water, redress the tremendous wrong done to this community, and require new or amended Ontario laws to protect drinking water.

HYDRO QUEBEC - Intervention at the Supreme Court of Canada to support the constitutional validity of federal toxics legislation. This decision upheld federal authority to protect the environment (not just human health) under criminal law powers, and made other legal findings that place the federal government's power to regulate toxic substances on solid ground.

LAFARGE - A landmark Ontario Divisional Court decision affirming important public participation rights under *Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights*, including that Ontario must comply with its Statements of Environmental Values.

CASTONGUAY - Intervention at the Supreme Court of Canada to affirm use of international law principles, specifically the precautionary principle, in interpreting Ontario's *Environmental Protection Act*.



HIGHLIGHTING 50 YEARS OF LAW REFORM

CELA has been instrumental in advancing or reforming an extensive body of law and international agreements over the last 50 years. Relying upon rigorous, non-partisan, and evidence-based analysis, we have worked in collaboration with colleagues and partner organizations, often as founding members of some of Ontario and Canada's most productive and innovative coalitions. These have included the Low Income Energy Network, RentSafe, Green Prosperity, the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition, and many others addressing issues such as Great Lakes protection, children's health, climate change, acid rain, pesticides and other toxic substances, and nuclear waste. While we can always do more, we are sure that Ontarians and Canadians are healthier and safer because of CELA's work.

ONTARIO LAW

- Ontario Water Resources Act
- Environmental Protection Act
- Environmental Assessment Act
- Safe Drinking Water Act
- Nutrient Management Act
- Clean Water Act
- Environmental Bill of Rights
- Class Proceedings Act
- Great Lakes Protection Act

FEDERAL LAW

- Canadian Environmental Protection Act
- Canadian Environmental Assessment Act
- Pest Control Products Act
- Canada Consumer Product Safety Act

BINATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

- Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
- International Trade Agreements



REFLECTIONS

by CELA co-founder David Estrin

50 years! As a CELA founder, I well know how long CELA has been doing its excellent work. Many of us involved in starting CELA were passionate about seeking innovative legal approaches, but we never imagined the lengths and depths of CELA's impact on Canada's environmental laws. A key development was to recognize environmental law as a matter of social justice, illustrated by CELA becoming a specialty clinic within the Legal Aid Ontario clinic system in 1978. Those most impacted by air pollution, unsafe water, or contaminated land are often the least able to avoid such threats. Across my environmental law career, I always paid attention to CELA's work, appreciating the "upstream" approach of identifying actions to improve underlying factors that contribute to environmental pollution. These issues are never easy. CELA respects that healthy communities include good jobs, healthy housing, and diverse aspects of social justice, making CELA's work with sister legal aid clinics, other service providers, health partners, and educators so important. As CELA moves towards this big milestone, I will continue to watch and appreciate the incredible work it undertakes, and feel very proud of the organization I was part of at the very beginning!

WHAT'S NEXT?

by Lesley Cameron, CELA Board Chair

CELA has a dynamic future and I am proud to Chair this organization. In 2017, CELA's staff and Board collaborated on refining two new strategic priorities: Access to Environmental Justice; and Pollution Prevention, Environmental Health and Safety, building on a long history of expertise and setting new focus and direction. CELA provides guidance to communities, individuals, families and First Nations on how to effectively participate in environmental approval decisions that will directly affect them. With decades of individual and institutional expertise, CELA is recognized by governments as a source of helpful, actionable advice, and specialized skills to show where reform is needed to outdated laws, including drafting model legislation if necessary. I am especially proud that CELA works with so many members of the public, other ENGOS, health organizations, other service providers and professionals, as well as with government and decision makers to find opportunities to advance environmental law protection in Ontario, in Canada and internationally and achieve tangible benefits: healthier air to breathe, safer water to drink. I look forward to joining CELA's many friends in celebrating this great work for many years to come!

