



Ecological Society of Japan
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18 June 2012

Rt Hon. Stephen Harper
Prime Minister
CANADA

Dear Prime Minister,

I represent the Ecological Society of Japan, which is concerned with research on all aspects of ecology, together with ecological sciences, and has more than four thousand members in Japan and other foreign countries. We are strongly raising an objection to the proposed closure in 2013 of Environment Canada's Experimental lakes Area (ELA) in Ontario. The ELA is a unique facility for aquatic research, world-important for the quality of its work and the relevance of the problems it studies on both a global and domestic basis.

Various kinds of environmental problems caused through global climate change have been aggravated during the last two decades, and researchers have been pointing out remarkable decrease in cryosphere, changes in the world water cycle, deterioration of biodiversity and so on (The 4th report by IPCC, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). Monitoring natural environments to understand their status quo and conducting tests and/or experiments to identify the issue(s) in the environments are necessary and essential operations. Lake environments are a closed system more susceptible to changes in external environments than other large systems such as marine environments, being a superior sensor of environmental changes. So, ELA has been taking a strong leadership on tackling contemporary environmental problems of great concern to all of us such as lake eutrophication and acid rain, demonstrating the importance of freshwater systems. There is no other comparable facility in the world.

In addition, most of freshwater environmental problems have been caused by massive growth by particular organisms such as cyanobacteria. Because of closed system and high accessibility, researches in lakes may be more efficient than that of marine or terrestrial systems to elucidate complex interactions among organisms. So, using relatively low financial support, we may use up-to-date, modern, sophisticated and well-organized research system for future human well-being, and this is all what

ELA has. We must not lose it. Research fruits in ecology have greatly contributed in most human activities, and this is what ELA has been doing till now.

We ecologists know that the sort of work that the ELA carries out requires long-term funding, and ELA is the research facility worth supporting by the Government of Canada. The closure of the ELA is probably our serious loss of precious institution to detect environmental crisis. Indiscreet decisions by governments have so far had catastrophic damages on human lives, and this is in many cases due to the short term economy. We urge the Government of Canada to reconsider its decision to close operations at the ELA, hoping the government would continuously commit itself to solve environmental problems in both domestic and global systems.

Yours sincerely

Hiroyuki Matsuda,
President
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Matsuda". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter "H" being particularly large and stylized.