

## Minister visiting Randle Reef

The Hamilton Spectator

(Jul 17, 2007)

Federal Environment Minister John Baird better keep a tight grip on his wallet when he visits Hamilton Harbour and the Royal Botanical Gardens today, because local officials are looking for lots of money.

No announcements are expected, however.

The trip is billed as an opportunity to make the minister aware of the need to clean up Randle Reef - - Canada's second worst case of coal tar contamination after the Sydney tar ponds -- and the RBG's need to expand and improve its tourist attractions.

Jim Hudson, executive director of the Bay Area Restoration Council, wants the Harper government to ante up \$30 million toward the \$90-million cost of capping and containing contaminated sediment on the harbour floor.

RBG executive director Mark Runciman has his hand out for a contribution to the \$11.6-million Gateway Gardens project, the first phase of a gardens rejuvenation and enhancement program.

Conservative MPs Mike Wallace (Burlington) and David Sweet (Ancaster-Flamborough-Dundas-Westdale) will take the minister from Ottawa West-Nepean on a short boat tour to see where the reef lies -- offshore from the foot of Sherman Avenue, close to Hamilton Steel -- and will then turn him over to Runciman for a private tour of the gardens.

Wallace said he's interested in water issues, "and the biggest in Burlington or Hamilton is Randle Reef, one of Canada's hot spots in terms of environmental damage.

"To get the federal government more involved, it's important to get the minister to understand and there's no better way than to have him visit the site and talk to the people involved."

With a minority government in Ottawa and a provincial election this fall, Hudson said, "I've been calling on pretty much every politician around."

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