

Other governments need to step up

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Re: 'Water plan slowed to level off tax hike' (Dec. 5)

The Bay Area Restoration Council (BARC), like most who care about our harbour, was happy to see Halton's Skyway wastewater treatment plant upgrades funded so quickly by higher levels of government. Our provincial and federal elected representatives were quick to recognize the rationale for this upgrade and act upon it.

If it makes sense to upgrade the Skyway plant, it makes sense many times over to upgrade Hamilton's Woodward plant. This much higher volume plant puts four times more effluent into our harbour than Skyway. And that's on a good day! When it rains heavily, the plant, already running at full capacity, simply can't keep up and untreated sewage gets dumped in the harbour.

Together, the two plants account for 500 million litres per day, or 50 per cent of all water flowing into our harbour.

Is this what we want to show the world when the Pan Am Games come to town? Do we want to tell people they can't build a house in Hamilton because development is frozen?

The pollution in our harbour was not created only by and for Hamiltonians. The industrial output of our city has improved the lives of many Ontarians and Canadians. Is it too much to ask for prompt, significant help in its cleanup? Most restoration to date has been locally funded. Now it's time for the governments of Ontario and Canada to step up.

This is Hamilton's opportunity to move forward with a progressive new image and infrastructure to match.

The alternative is to curtail development while we drag out restoration of our harbour until who knows when.