

ONEIG SPRING 2023



# ONTARIO NURSES FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Official Newsletter of ONEIG  
An RNO Interest Group



## GET THE LEAD OUT! WATER CONVERSATIONS WITH CELA

*By Rob Samulack*

On March 8th, ONEIG co-chair, Rob Samulack attended the Water Conversations zoom session put on by the Canadian Environmental Law Association. Lead bioaccumulates in living organisms and, in humans, can cause many negative health outcomes. There is no safe level of lead in municipal drinking water and efforts are being made to eliminate it entirely, however those efforts are piece-meal municipality by municipality. Health Canada guidelines call for a maximum of 5 mcg/L whereas Ontario guidelines still allow for 10 mcg/L. Older houses are worse off.

Many barriers exist fixing this problem. Often the municipality has responsibility for lead in the service line up to the property line, but it is the responsibility of the private property owner after that. Even if the property owner knows of the existence of lead, that information may not be passed on to the tenant. In some jurisdictions, when a tenant requests testing, the municipality may require the owner's consent. Some vulnerable sector institutions, like regulated daycare facilities and schools, have mandatory testing. There was talk of testing being a part of real estate disclosures at time of sale to encourage property owners to make changes, much like replacing a roof.

### This issue:

Get the Lead out!  
PAGES 1 & 2

ONEIG at Queen's Park  
PAGES 03

Fossil Fuels in the Great  
Lakes  
PAGES 04

Nutrition & Food Security  
PAGES 05

Ontario's Energy Grid  
PAGE 06

Policy Perspective  
PAGE 07

Contact ONEIG  
PAGE 08



# GET THE LEAD OUT!

## WATER CONVERSATIONS WITH CELA

Municipalities like Ottawa for free testing programs and loan programs to assist with replacements. However, this is a health equity issue as renters or lower-income owners often do not have the permission or financial capacity to replace lead pipes.

Provincial regulation in line with Health Canada guidelines would be the best means of creating change, but this requires political will - something lacking in our current red-tape cutting, wetland-paving, gas plant building political climate provincially. A cost analysis comparing the cost of implementing the elimination of lead in drinking water to the cost burden to the healthcare and social services systems as well as loss of productivity will need to be made to fiscally-minded policymakers.

### Further reading:

- Canadian Environmental Law Association - [Get the Lead Out of Drinking Water Law Reform](#)
- Ontario Municipal Wastewater Association - [Technical Paper](#)
- [Get the Lead Out webinar](#) in Hamilton
- [Cutting Lead Poisoning and Public Costs](#)
- [New Online Tool](#) Calculates the Cost and Economic Benefits of Preventing Childhood Lead Exposure in the United States
- Lead issue in [Flint](#)

*By Rob Samulack*



Love the earth  
as you would  
love yourself

~JOHN DENVER

Celebrate Earth Day  
your way!

- meditate outside
- plant a tree or flowers that attract bees and birds or start a vegetable garden
- when you run out of an item, use the opportunity to switch to an eco-friendly version
- Take your friends or family on a walk



# ONEIG Goes to Queen's Park 2023

This March, I represented ONEIG (in person!) to shake things up and advocate for health directly at Queen's Park. RNAO advocated together for the desperate need for action on the nursing staffing crisis (drawing on wisdom from the [Nursing Career Pathways](#) report) and the opioid crisis (including decriminalization, and equitable access to safe supply and injection services). I was joined by other members from my local area Waterloo Chapter and grateful for Kathy Moreland, who has really championed action on the opioid crisis anchored by both research evidence and personal experience.

As I mentioned in the winter newsletter, the most effective strategy for health system resilience is a robust and well-trained workforce. To reduce demand and preventable illness and death, we also need to act on some of the greatest threats to public health today: climate change and ecological degradation. This is why I used my question to Deputy Premier Sylvia Jones and Minister of Long-term Care Paul Calandra to ask whether the government will repeal Bill 23, the focus of an [RNAO action alert](#). Minister Calandra directly stated 'no', citing the need for housing as the most pressing concern. Here is a short response I wish I had the opportunity to give:

*By Josalyn Radcliffe*



ONEIG at QPD 2023: Jess Burford, Communications ENO (Left) and Co-Chair Josalyn Radcliffe (Right)

**EXPERTS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT WE HAVE ENOUGH LAND FOR HOUSING IN HAMILTON AND TORONTO- MORE THAN WHAT IS BEING TAKEN FROM THE GREENBELT! FURTHERMORE, MULTIPLE ORGANIZATIONS THAT ADVOCATE FOR RENTERS AND LOWER-INCOME RESIDENTS HAVE DESCRIBED HOW BILL 23 REMOVED PROTECTIONS AND ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS. GLOBAL AND NATIONAL COMMITMENTS TO ADDRESS THE URGENT CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY CRISES REQUIRE CONSERVATION, LAND RESTORATION, AND DENSIFICATION OF CITIES, WHILE THIS BILL INCREASES RELIANCE ON PERSONAL VEHICLES AND DAMAGES BIODIVERSE, FOOD-RICH LAND IN IRREVERSIBLE WAYS.**

**I WAS PROUD TO USE MY VOICE TO BRING ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS TO THE LEGISLATURE. MOREOVER, QUEEN'S PARK DAY WAS A BEAUTIFUL OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK WITH MANY NURSE COLLEAGUES AND TO RECONNECT TO OUR CENTRAL PURPOSE OF SUPPORTING THE WELL-BEING OF THE POPULATION, AND THE WELL-BEING OF ONE ANOTHER. I WAS ABLE TO SPEAK TO POLITICIANS DIRECTLY AND WITNESSED SOME FIGHTING HARD FOR EQUITY AND HEALTHY POLICY. AS I HEADED HOME IN YET ANOTHER SNOWSTORM, QUEEN'S PARK LEFT ME WITH RENEWED ENERGY AND HOPE.**

# FOSSIL FUELS THROUGH THE GREAT LAKES: LINE 5

*By Josalyn Radcliffe*

On April 5th, I had the opportunity to learn about Line 5. On a panel moderated by Michelle Woodhouse, a Métis water defender and program director at Environmental Defence, Indigenous leaders highlighted serious concerns regarding the line 5 gas pipeline that runs through the Straits of Mackinac. They spoke about a legal battle launched by tribal nations and the state of Michigan in the United States against line 5, to force the decommissioning of the over fifty-year-old pipeline, which has been the source of fossil fuel spills and crosses over a very sensitive area.

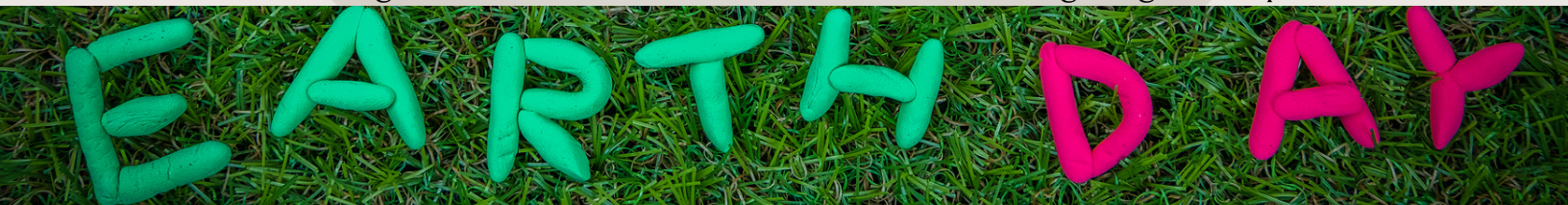


Image: CBC, 2021:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/line-5-pipeline-deadline-1.6020665>

As quoted in a press release by Environmental Defence, Chairperson Austin Lowes of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians stated: “The Straits of Mackinac are central to the Anishinaabe creation story, which makes this location sacred from both a cultural and historical perspective in the formation of the Anishinaabe people. Protecting the Straits is also a matter of the utmost environmental and economic importance – both to our people and the state of Michigan.”

Research and experts have demonstrated that a spill here would be catastrophic and a new report from Environmental Defence shows that there are alternative pathways to supply fuel to these areas. On the same day as this panel, leaders from tribal nations launched a press release about a recently filed complaint to the United Nations Human Rights Council regarding Canada’s interference with their ability to protect their nations’ lands, people, and culture. Learn more about Line 5 through the press release from Environmental Defence and consider signing their petition here.



# PROPER NUTRITION & FOOD SECURITY GO HAND & HAND

by Hilda Swirsky

DURING THIS TIME OF CLIMATE CRISIS CREATING FOOD INSECURITY, INCREASED FOOD PRICES, ANXIETY AND RECORD HIGH NUMBERS OF PEOPLE GOING TO FOOD BANKS, THIS YEAR'S EARTH DAY CALL TO INVEST IN OUR PLANET IS MORE VITAL THAN EVER BEFORE. THEREFORE, I SHARE WITH YOU, OUR COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE TO THIS CALL TO ACT AND FOCUS ON INVESTING IN OUR PLANET TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN OUR PROJECT AND IN THE COMMUNITIES IN WHICH THEY LIVE: BY GROWING VEGETABLES LOCALLY THROUGH THE EXPANDED REENA COMMUNITY FARM, INITIATIVE AND HAVING PROPER NUTRITION GO HAND IN HAND WITH FOOD SECURITY.

50 YEARS AGO, OUR BELOVED RABBI JOSEPH KELMAN, OF BLESSED MEMORY WAS APPROACHED BY A SYNAGOGUE MEMBER WHO WAS AGING AND CARING FOR HIS CHALLENGED CHILD. VERY LITTLE WAS AVAILABLE AND NOTHING IN OUR JEWISH COMMUNITY. THUS, RABBI KELMAN BEGAN RAISING FUNDS AND REENA WAS BORN. NOW, THERE ARE NUMEROUS RESOURCES INCLUDING GROUP HOMES, A NEW OLD AGE FACILITY AND THE GREEN INITIATIVE, WHICH HAS DEVELOPED REENA COMMUNITY FARMS.

IN 2023, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS PROVIDED FUNDING, WHICH OUR SYNAGOGUE AND OUR NEIGHBOURING SYNAGOGUE APPLIED FOR AND RECEIVED THAT WILL HAVE AN OUTREACH TO OUR SENIORS THROUGHOUT THIS PROJECT AND OUR CHALLENGED INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE PARTICIPANTS OF THE SUCCESSFUL REENA ORGANIZATION TO EXPAND THE LOCATIONS OF THE REENA COMMUNITY FARMS. AS A COMPONENT OF THIS INITIATIVE, WE WILL BEGIN EDUCATING MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN CARING FOR THE HYDROPONIC INTERMODAL CONTAINERS ARRIVING IN JUNE THAT WILL GROW VEGETABLES AND HERBS YEAR-ROUND. THESE CONTAINERS WILL BE FULLY ACCESSIBLE SINCE REENA WORKED WITH THE RICK HANSEN FOUNDATION TO ENABLE INDIVIDUALS IN WHEELCHAIRS TO WORK WITH THESE CONTAINERS.

OUR EARTH DAY PLANNING COMMITTEE IS IN THE PROCESS OF CREATING A BOOKLET FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS IN OUR EARTH DAY PROGRAM. INCLUDED IN THE BOOKLET WILL BE HEALTHY EATING TIPS AND VEGETABLE JOKES.

OUR EARTH DAY PROGRAM WILL INCLUDE HAVING A CHEF BAKE 7 SPECIES OF CHALLAH AND DISTRIBUTE IT TO THE AUDIENCE, THEN HE WILL MAKE A SALAD AND ONE OTHER DISH.

EACH PERSON WILL GET A BOOKLET THAT INCLUDES TIPS SUCH AS:

FOR EXAMPLE: WHAT DID THE FATHER TOMATO SAY TO THE BABY TOMATO? KETCHUP AND WHICH VEGETABLES SHOULD WE EAT? A RAINBOW OF VEGETABLES.

WISHING YOU AN AMAZING EARTH DAY IN WHICH YOU ACT SIMPLY AND EASILY TO INVEST IN OUR PLANET.



# ONTARIO'S ENERGY GRID: MORE DANGEROUS AND DIRTY

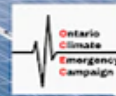
## Beyond Gas: Ontario's Energy Future

A discussion with **Mark Jacobson**  
moderated by journalist, **Avis Favaro**  
and responses from **Gaby Kalapos & Jack Gibbons**



**Tuesday April 18th**  
**7:00PM EST | Zoom**

Hosted by:



*By Josalyn Radcliffe*

As I discussed in our collaborative webinar with the Community Health Nurses' Initiatives' Group on March 27, 2023, Ontario is quickly going down a dangerous path of introducing new fracked methane gas plants despite evidence that our energy needs can be met through renewables. This decision occurs in the context of a new IPCC report synthesizing thousands of research projects and describing the urgent need to immediately and dramatically reduce our emissions using the tools and strategies already available. There is so much hope to create a healthy, sustainable future with political will and public support.

On April 18th, join this collaborative webinar with Mark Jacobson and learn about the evidence and what we can do to address this dangerous direction in Ontario.



# EARTH DAY: POLICY PERSPECTIVES WITH OLIVIA

AS EARTH DAY APPROACHES THIS YEAR IT IS IMPORTANT FOR NURSES TO REMAIN VIGILANT ABOUT PRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ISSUES THAT IMPACT US AS NURSES AND OUR PATIENTS.

THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO IS LOOKING TO PASS BILL 71 BUILDING MORE MINES ACT, 2023. WITH THE LAST DAY FOR FOR PUBLIC COMMENT THROUGH THE ENVIRONMENTAL REGISTRY OF ONTARIO BEING APRIL 16, 2023. BILL 71 IS ADVERTISED AS PROVIDING AMENDMENTS TO THE MINING ACT THAT WOULD REMOVE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS & IMPROVE EFFICIENCY. AND WHAT IS THE TRADEOFF FOR THESE "IMPROVEMENTS"? BILL 71 IS EXPECTED TO: REDUCE THE PROTECTIONS FOR THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN PROSPECTIVE MINING AREAS, REDUCE REQUIREMENTS FOR MINING COMPANIES TO POST BONDS FOR CLEAN-UP COSTS ONCE MINING ACTIVITY ENDS, LOWER STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION MEASURES, ALLOW COMPANIES TO START OPERATIONS BEFORE HAVING COMPREHENSIVE CLOSURE PLANS, AND ALLOW COMPANIES TO APPROVE THEIR OWN CLOSURE AND REHABILITATION PLANS WITHOUT GOVERNMENT APPROVAL.

WHY IS BILL 71 RELEVANT TO NURSING? SOME STUDIES SUGGEST THAT LIVING IN COMMUNITIES SURROUNDING ACTIVE MINES RAISES THE LIKELIHOOD OF CITIZENS DEVELOPING CANCER FROM THE EXPOSURE TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES (ALTHOUGH SPECIFIC CANCERS ARE RELATED TO DIFFERENT TYPES OF MATERIALS MINED). ABANDONED MINE DRAINAGE MAY RESULT IN POLLUTED WATER AND ADVERSELY IMPACT HUMAN LIFE, PLANT LIFE, AND WILDLIFE IF REHABILITATION MEASURES ARE LOWERED. THIS IN TURN IMPACTS FOOD CHAINS WHEN CROPS AND ANIMALS ARE POISONED BY EXPOSURE TO HEAVY METALS AND CAN RESULT IN LOCAL FOOD INSECURITY OR ECONOMIC STRIFE WHEN PRODUCTS CANNOT BE SOLD. CHILDREN RAISED IN MINING AREAS ARE OFTEN OBSERVED TO HAVE HIGHER LEVELS OF HEAVY METAL IN THEIR BODY WHICH CAN HAVE LONG-TERM NEUROLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES.

THE PEOPLE IMPACTED BY BILL 71 COULD BE YOUR PATIENTS. FROM AN ADVOCACY PERSPECTIVE, YOU CAN SIGN A PETITION OPPOSING THE AMENDMENTS TO THE MINING ACT, OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL MPP TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE. FROM AN EDUCATION PERSPECTIVE YOU CAN READ MORE ON THE ISSUE TO INFORM YOURSELF, AND EDUCATE YOUR PATIENTS ON WHAT IMPACTS TO THEIR HEALTH MAY INCLUDE. FROM A TREATMENT PERSPECTIVE YOU CAN FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CURRENT CONDITIONS THAT CAN ARISE IN COMMUNITIES NEAR MINES.

REMEMBER THAT ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION AND EDUCATION SHOULD NOT STOP ONCE EARTH DAY IS OVER!

## References

- Building more mines act, 2023. Legislative Assembly of Ontario. (2023, March). Retrieved April 7, 2023, from <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-43/session-1/bill-71>
- Mining Watch Canada. (2023, March 7). More, worse mining: Ontario's proposed building more mines act. MiningWatch. Retrieved April 7, 2023, from <https://miningwatch.ca/blog/2023/3/7/more-worse-mining-ontarios-proposed-building-more-mines-act>
- Ontario Nature. (2023). Voice Your Concern about Proposed Mining Act Amendments. Ontario Nature. Retrieved April 7, 2023, from <https://ontarionature.good.do/mining-act-amendments/petition/>
- Fernández-Navarro P, García-Pérez J, Ramis R, Boldo E, López-Abente G. Proximity to mining industry and cancer mortality. *Sci Total Environ*. 2012 Oct 1;435-436:66-73. doi: 10.1016/j.scitotenv.2012.07.019. Epub 2012 Jul 28. PMID: 22846765.
- United States Environmental Protection Agency. (2022, December). Abandoned Mine Drainage. EPA. Retrieved April 7, 2023, from <https://www.epa.gov/nps/abandoned-mine-drainage>
- MiningWatch Canada. (2004). Overburdened. MiningWatch Canada.

LIVE WITH CARE-  
EVERYDAY IS  
EARTH DAY!

*By Olivia Brundia*



# LET'S TALK ONEIG!!

ATTENTION NURSES WHO CARE ABOUT PLANETARY HEALTH!

OUR ONEIG EXECUTIVE TEAM IS LOOKING FOR YOU!

2023 ELECTIONS: OPENING APRIL 19TH!

AVAILABLE POSITIONS:

- CO-CHAIR
- FINANCE EXECUTIVE NETWORK OFFICE
- MEMBERSHIP EXECUTIVE NETWORK OFFICE
- COMMUNICATION EXECUTIVE NETWORK OFFICE
- CANE LIAISON
- 4 MEMBERS-AT-LARGE (\*THESE POSITIONS MAY TRANSITION TO SHARE EXECUTIVE ROLES AT THE AGM)

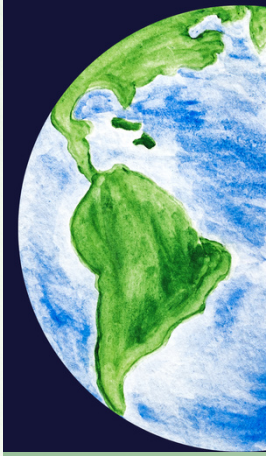
PLEASE REACH OUT ANYTIME TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GROUP AND HOW YOU MIGHT WANT TO BE INVOLVED VIA SOCIAL MEDIA OR [ONEIGRNO@gmail.com](mailto:ONEIGRNO@gmail.com)

## SAVE THE DATE:

OUR TENTATIVE QUARTERLY MEMBER MEETING DATE IS MONDAY, JUNE 5TH, 2023 FROM 7:30-9PM. KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR INBOX AND OUR SOCIAL MEDIA FOR THE REGISTRATION LINK ONCE AVAILABLE!

## RNAO'S 98TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

CONNECT WITH MEMBERS OF ONEIG IN PERSON AT THE RNAO AGM HOSTED AT THE HILTON TORONTO JUNE 22-24, 2023. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!



# EARTH DAY



[oneigrno@gmail.com](mailto:oneigrno@gmail.com)



<https://chapters-igs.rnao.ca/interestgroup/36/about>



@ONEIGrno



@ONEIGrno



@ONEIGrno



[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=oneig+rno](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=oneig+rno)

