

MCI Testimony to House Environment Feb. 18, 2026

Slide no.1

MCI is a citizen-led environmental organization in Québec founded in 1967 to protect and maintain the environment of the Lake Memphremagog's watershed.

MCI's president Johanne Lavoie, has delegated for today's presentation board members Antonio Di Fruscia and Robert Benoit.

We are pleased to participate and support DUMP's leadership with the House bill H.652.

One of MCI's central efforts has always been to protect the lake from environmental contamination originating from any source, including the Coventry landfill. Concern about landfill leachate—containing harmful chemicals such as PFAS—and about its discharge into the watershed remains a priority for our organization.

We would like to take this opportunity to highlight three important facts in the following slides.

Slide 2.

MCI is actively working with Québec municipalities surrounding Lake Memphrémagog, as well as the City of Sherbrooke, to encourage the adoption of resolutions aligned with the intent and direction of House Bill H.652. The Canton of Stanstead adopted such a resolution in November 2025, and other municipalities are expected to follow shortly the resolution outlines several critical points:

The Importance of Lake Memphrémagog

Serves as the source of drinking water for more than 185,000 Canadians • Supplies drinking water to multiple Québec municipalities, including Sherbrooke, Magog, Pottou, and Saint-Benoît-du-Lac • Represents a natural and cultural jewel of the Eastern Townships, shared between Canada and the United States

The Leachate Contamination Threat

Vermont's only landfill, located at the head of the lake in Coventry, generates leachate containing PFAS ("forever chemicals") and other toxic pollutants • The lake flows from south (United States) to north (Canada), making upstream contamination a critical concern for Canadian communities

Actions Undertaken to Protect the Lake

Ban on discharging leachate into the watershed implemented in November 2019 • Formal opposition from Québec municipalities dating back to 2004 • Initial moratorium enforced from 2004 to 2009 • Unanimous motion by Québec's National Assembly in June 2021 calling for a permanent ban on leachate discharge

Current Concerns

Risk that leachate discharge could resume after the current moratorium expires • Presence of contaminants—including arsenic, cadmium, and PFAS—that pose dangers to public health • PFAS contamination already detected in fish species within the lake • Conventional treatment processes cannot fully remove these persistent contaminants

International Treaty Obligations

The resolution invokes the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 and reminds elected officials on both sides of the border of their shared responsibility to protect this transboundary water resource"

Slide no.3

In 2021, Québec's National Assembly unanimously adopted a motion calling for an end to any leachate discharge into the Memphrémagog watershed.

[Link to resolution in pdf]

Slide no.4

Québec permanently closed its own landfill (Bestan) in the watershed in 2010 to protect this shared drinking water source.

- The Bestan Landfill, located in Magog, Québec, was owned and operated by Waste Management (WM) until operations ceased in 2009.
- In 2007, WM sought to expand and modernize the site to meet stricter standards adopted by the Québec Ministry of the Environment.
- A united opposition from municipalities, MCI, and partners emerged, with key concerns about contamination risks to the Lake Memphrémagog watershed and drinking water supply.
- Municipalities diverted their waste elsewhere, rendering WM's proposed expansion economically unviable.
- Permanent closure was achieved in 2009.

- The site remains a potential environmental threat requiring ongoing vigilance.
- WM is legally obligated to capture and treat leachate offsite from the Bestan landfill.
- MCI continues monitoring activities to ensure transparency and protect Lake Memphrémagog.

Letter of support for H.652 from Johanne Lavoie, President, Memphremagog Conservation, Inc. (MCI)

To the Vermont House Environment Committee

Dear Chair Sheldon and Co-Chair Labor,

I am writing today on behalf of the Board of Memphremagog Conservation Inc. (MCI) and its members.

MCI is a citizen-led environmental organization founded in 1967 to protect and preserve the environment of the Lake Memphremagog's watershed.

One of our central efforts has been to protect the lake from environmental contamination originating from any source, including the Coventry landfill located at the head of the lake in Vermont. Concern about landfill leachate—containing harmful chemicals such as PFAS—and about its discharge into the watershed remains a priority for our organization.

House Bill H.652, introduced by Representatives Woody Page and Larry Labor, offers a straightforward and effective solution to a complex problem. If adopted, it would prohibit the discharge of landfill leachate, treated or untreated, anywhere in the Memphremagog watershed. While other environmental challenges remain, including air emissions and potential uncollected leachate, H.652 represents a major step forward. For us in Québec—185,000 of whom rely on the lake for their drinking water—this bill would be a significant advancement in protecting public health and our shared lake.

I would also like to highlight three important facts from Québec:

1 MCI is actively working with the Québec municipalities surrounding Lake Memphremagog, as well as with the City of Sherbrooke, to encourage the adoption of resolutions aligned with the intent and direction of House Bill H.652.

2 Québec's National Assembly unanimously adopted a 2021 motion calling for an end to any leachate discharge into the Memphremagog watershed.

3 Québec permanently closed its own landfill (Bestan) in the watershed in 2010 to protect this shared drinking water source.

MCI will also testify jointly with DUMP (Don't Undermine Memphremagog's Purity) this Wednesday, and we are pleased to participate and support their leadership on this file.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns. Please direct any questions or comments to me or our Board member, Antonio Di Fruscia.

With sincere appreciation,

Johanne Lavoie

Merci!

Johanne Lavoie

Présidente bénévole

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