

Mayor Bill Weber and Lambton Shores Council  
c/o Stephanie Troyer-Boyd, Clerk  
Municipality of Lambton Shores  
7883 Amtelecom Parkway  
Forest, N0N 1J0

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**Re: Gypsy Moth Outbreak**

Dear Mayor Weber and Members of Council:

I am part of the team dealing with the gypsy moth outbreak in my neighbourhood of Huron Woods. Although I am writing today as an individual property owner, I feel an obligation to attempt to represent my community.

If the municipality does not lead a spray program, **my biggest concern is the large number of people who will not be able to spray their own properties.** The waivers required by Zimmer Air Services, Inc. mean that if a property owner cannot contact all of their neighbours, or a neighbour does not reply, or a neighbour chooses not to allow any drift onto their property, a 20-meter (65-foot) no-spray buffer must be maintained inside the property wishing to spray. This means very little of that property can be sprayed, or it cannot be sprayed at all.

**A municipality-led spray program ensures all those wishing to have their property sprayed will be able to do so.** Municipalities in Ontario that conduct spray programs pass a by-law that negates the need for waivers.

Of those in my community that our gypsy moth outbreak team has spoken to or heard from, all but two (we have spoken with about 100) want their property sprayed, would prefer the municipality to lead this program, and are willing to pay for the service. **If the municipal council is not willing to do this, I hope they would be willing to look into passing a by-law negating the need for waivers. This would at least give property owners the right to have an aerial spray treatment for gypsy moths done on their own properties.**

**By accommodating the two percent who do not want to have their property sprayed, you could be denying the right to spray of far more property owners. Each property owner who cannot be contacted or declines spraying could impinge on the right to spray of four or more neighbouring properties.**

The only objections to spraying that we have encountered stem from a misunderstanding of what BTK is and how it works, or a perceived unfairness that other lands do not receive support for pest management. **BTK, an organic bacterium formula, poses no health risks to humans or animals, and only impacts lepidoptera in the same stages of development as the gypsy moth – not monarchs and other endangered species in our area.** "Lambton Public Health has no public health-based objections to aerial spraying of BTK as part of a moth control plan ...."<sup>1</sup>

Many insects, such as the emerald ash borer target only one species of tree or plant. However, **a severe gypsy moth infestation can affect many varieties of trees, and will kill some in one season.** If there are not enough oak leaves to support a gypsy moth population, they will move onto other deciduous trees, then onto conifers which will die as a consequence of having their needles consumed. The number of egg masses being reported indicate we are in a severe infestation.

**I believe there is a difference between supporting pest management programs for residences and for businesses** such as farming, motels and resorts, or golf courses, etc. These businesses make money from their properties, and a degree of their success depends on controlling pests and other risks. Taking measures to prevent damage from insects, and taking out insurance to cover losses due to them, is an expected expense deducted from the profit that business provides.

**A blanket spray of areas affected by gypsy moths would significantly reduce the spread to surrounding areas, and reduce the likelihood of dealing with the issue in subsequent years here and in the surrounding areas.** When gypsy moths hatch, they float on gossamer threads for up to 10 kilometres. This is why spaces like the highway 21 corridor were so devastated this year. Open areas and winds can move the larvae long distances. Gypsy moths travel with great speed and ease – whether it is through the air at the beginning of the season, or on vehicles over the course of the summer. **Sporadic pest management measures by individual property owners leaves large tracts of untreated land that facilitate the growth and spread of gypsy moths.**

The oak savanna of Lambton Shores is not only rare and precious, it is part of the foundation of our tourist economy. Though they will suffer damage, healthy trees may endure a few years of defoliation. Many of the trees in affected areas are neither young nor healthy, and for some areas this is the third year of infestation. **Citizens and council have a duty to be good stewards of our tree canopy for the sake of the trees themselves, and for all the flora and fauna that depend on it for food, shelter, and protection.**

There are many advantages to a municipality-led spray program:

- economy-of-scale and contiguous-acreage rate discounts
- a simpler administration process
- minimizing conflicts between neighbours if some refuse to sign waivers or fail to respond
- increased effectiveness in containing and limiting the spread of this invasive pest
- the wellbeing of Lambton Shores residents, wildlife, and economy
- ensuring all who wish to have their property sprayed maintain the right to do so.

Sincerely,

Anne Thornton

<sup>1</sup> *Sarnia City Council Meeting Agenda, May 22, 2020, p. 12*