

July 18, 2011

**Remarks by Franz Hartmann, Executive Director, Toronto Environmental Alliance
to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
on the Core Services Review**

My name is Franz Hartmann. I am the Executive Director of the Toronto Environmental Alliance. We represent over 15,000 Torontonians – increasingly from all parts of the city -- who want to build a greener Toronto for all.

My colleagues – who will be following me -- will be commenting on specific recommendations in the Mayor's consultant's report that is in front of you. My remarks will be more general in nature.

First, I need to put my professor hat on. As some of you know, I've taught at the University of Toronto over the years, mostly 2nd and 3rd year courses in environmental policy. I've probably graded over 1,000 papers and exams.

If I had to grade the Mayor's consultants report, I wouldn't. I would hand it back to the Mayor with the following comment:

“Your analysis is incomplete. I'm not sure if this is due to a lack of proper research, rushed work or a misunderstanding of the issue. Please take this assignment seriously and take much more care.”

Why would I make these comments? Because the Mayor's consultants present us with a whole list of potential programs to be cut – they even provide us with potential savings that would come from these cuts. But they don't provide us with any information about the costs to Torontonians that could result from these cuts.

It's frankly impossible for anyone – Councillors, media, the public -- to draw any conclusions from the Mayor's consultants work because it only tells half the story. It's easy to say “cut recycling rates, eliminate toxic taxis, or eliminate community environment days” But the difficult work is figuring out what the short, medium and long-term consequences will be of these actions.

Even my 10-year old daughter has learned this lesson. She knows that the time she saves not cleaning her room now only makes matters much worse because -- down the road -- she will have to clean her room.

Either Mayor Ford or his consultants have not learned this lesson. How else do you explain making public a report that completely ignores the fact that every service cut outlined as an “opportunity” will have a cost for not delivering the service.

I could go on with a fairly lengthy list of other problems with the Mayor's consultant's report. Not only is there incomplete information, the information that is presented is either deliberately misleading or a consequence of sloppy research. For example, the cost for waste diversion is listed at \$343 gross on page 15 of Appendix B. Yet anyone knowledgeable with waste diversion in Toronto knows the city receives revenues for selling the products in the Blue Box and it receives revenue from the companies that create the material that ends up in the Blue Box. The \$343 figure –in short- is misleading.

It's also important to note that the so-called "savings" identified in this report will do almost nothing to deal with the so-called \$774 million budget pressure that is the reason for this whole exercise.

Every Councillor here should know that the solid waste management and water budgets are rate-based. For example, if waste management services like the toxic tax are cut, it will have no impact on the city's main operating budget. It will not relieve any so-called budget pressure or structural deficit in the city's operating budget.

Which gets to my final point. Mayor Ford was elected on a promise not to cut services. I assume this includes environmental services such as waste diversion. Yet, this report suggests the only way save money is by cutting services.

Torontonians have made it clear they don't want their services cut. It's now up to Mayor Ford to make it clear how he will keep his promise, when the report he commissioned says it can't be done.

It is not the job of Councillors on this Committee to figure out this conundrum. However, it is the job of this Committee to get the facts in front of you before making any decisions.

That's why my only recommendation to the Committee is to send the report back to Mayor Ford. Ask him to complete the work he started and find out the true costs to cutting the programs identified in the report. Then, ask him to identify which programs the Mayor thinks should be cut.