



# City of Corunna

402 N. Shiawassee  
Corunna, MI 48817  
Phone: (989) 743-3650  
Fax: (989) 743-4417

January 25, 2010

CERTIFIED MAIL

David A Hamilton, P.E., Chief  
Water Management Section  
Land and Water Management Division  
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality  
PO BOX 30458  
Lansing, MI 48909-7958

Dear Mr. Hamilton:

SUBJECT: Dam Safety Order, Corunna Dam, Dam ID 379, Shiawassee County

We are in receipt of your letter dated December 4, 2009 (postmarked December 15, 2009) to the Honorable Joe Sawyer, Mayor of Corunna. I apologize for the delay in response. In the future I request that you consider the adoption of response times realistic to the operations of local government, needed review times, and avoid sending these out as holiday greetings.

First let me correct the addressee in your communication. Joe Sawyer, although Honorable, is not, and has never been the Mayor of Corunna. Please direct future correspondence to Mayor of the City of Corunna, The Honorable Charles Kerridge.

Also, please note that Lieutenant Michael TerMeer is no longer the Shiawassee County Emergency Services Director. He was replaced by James Sanderson several years ago.

After review by the Corunna City Council, I was asked to send a response to your dam letter. We understand that a significant change has occurred in your office with the assignment of Jim Pawloski as our dam safety inspector to replace Paul Wessel who held the post for well over a decade. What has NOT changed significantly is the condition of our dam, the downstream or upstream geography of the river, or the potential risks in the event of a failure.

Please refer to the letter on file from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Water Management, Hydrological Survey Division, Chief of the Hydrologic Engineering Section Leon A. Cook . P.E. This letter, dated August 26, 1974, reads in part;

Mr. Hamilton  
Page 2  
January 25, 2010

***“Although this dam cannot be considered to be in good repair, we do not consider its condition to be hazardous. We therefore do not consider it justifiable to require the owner to engage a registered professional engineer and submit to us a report on the dam’s condition, as per our authority under Section 2© of Act 184, Public Acts of 1963, as amended. Should the dam not be maintained or repaired, it will eventually be reduced to a pile of rubble. It appears to us that properties located on the backwater of the dam are more subject to flooding than downstream properties.”***

This finding is in stark contrast to the position of the State of Michigan today. The City of Corunna fully concurs with the prior findings of the department, and believe the current mandate to be unenforceable, unfunded, and political in nature.

Although we recognize that statutes, policies and personnel change over time, we do not believe the findings of the 1974 Hydrological Survey regarding the condition, deterioration, or dangers of our structure have changed in any significant manner.

If statutes or policies have changed, we would request the State of Michigan to provide full funding for any resulting new mandates.

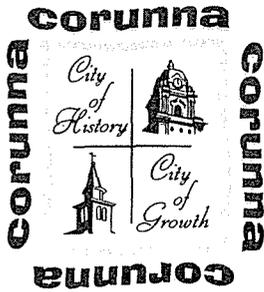
Respectfully,



Charles J. Kerridge  
Mayor, City of Corunna

Enclosures

Cc: James Sanderson, Shiawassee County Emergency Services  
Mr. Jim Pawloski, DEQ  
Mr. Joseph S. Sawyer, Corunna City Manager  
Mr. Steven E. Chester, Director, MI DEQ



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Charles J. Kerridge  
Mayor, City of Corunna

Enclosures

Cc: James Sanderson, Shiawassee County Emergency Services  
Mr. Jim Pawloski, DEQ  
Mr. Joseph S. Sawyer, Corunna City Manager  
Mr. Steven E. Chester, Director, MI DEQ

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

HILARY F. SNELL  
Chairman  
CARLT. JOHNSON E M LAITALA  
HARRY H. WHITELEY

JOAN L. WOLFE  
CHARLES G. YOUNGLOVE



WILLIAM G. MILLIKEN, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

STEVENS T. MASON BUILDING, LANSING, MICHIGAN 48926 A.  
GENE GAZLAY, Director

Mr. Thomas Lennox, City Manager  
City of Corunna 402 North  
Shiawassee Street Corunna,  
Michigan 48817

Dear Mr. Lennox:

In a letter to you dated July 24, 1974, Mr. Ralph, Purdy, Deputy Director, Environmental Protection Branch, stated that we would conduct an inspection of the Corunna Mill Pond Dam located on the Shiawassee River in the City of Corunna. On August 19, 1974, such an inspection was conducted.

Our inspection revealed that the following physical conditions presently exist:

1. The dam consists of approximately an 8 foot head concrete overflow structure that spans the entire length of the river. The dam and impoundment flooding are contained entirely within the natural river banks. The surface of the concrete has suffered from spalling as evidenced by chunks of concrete lying below the dam.
2. The old mill located on the left bank has had its superstructure removed and all that remains is these two stoplog control bays that were used to control the flow of the water through the mill. This stoplog control appears to be functional and could be used to dewater the impoundment, if necessary.
3. There appeared to be no development in the flood plain in the immediately downstream area of the dam that would be affected by a failure of the dam.

Due to the massiveness of this dam, it is highly unlikely that a complete failure would occur at one time. It might be possible for the dam to deteriorate to the point that, in time, a portion may fail. However, the impoundment has little storage capacity due to its smallness and sediment accumulation. Also, during flood flow conditions the dam would become at least partially submerged which would reduce its effective head. Therefore, under flood flow conditions, a failure of the dam is not likely to significantly increase downstream flood stages and thereby be the direct cause of any downstream property damage. In the event of failure, downstream movement of sediment from the impoundment would occur.



4174  
THE  
GREAT  
LAKE  
STATE

Mr. Lennox

-2-

August 26, 1974

Although this dam cannot be considered to be in good repair, we do not consider its condition to be hazardous. We therefore do not consider it justifiable to require the owner to engage a registered professional engineer and submit to us a report on the dam's condition, as per our authority under Section 2(c) of Act 184, Public Acts of 1963, as amended, Should the dam not be maintained or repaired, it will eventually be reduced to a pile of rubble. It appeared to us that property located on the backwater of the dam are more subject to flooding than downstream properties.

Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention, and if you should have any further questions, please feel free to contact us.

Very truly yours,

BUREAU OF WATER MANAGEMENT  
Hydrological Survey Division



Leon A. Cook, P.E., Chief  
Hydrologic Engineering Section

LAC: dp  
cc: D. Granger  
R. Purdy



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
LANSING



STEVEN E. CHESTER  
DIRECTOR

December 4, 2009

CERTIFIED MAIL

The Honorable Joe Sawyer  
Mayor of Corunna  
402 North Shiawassee Street  
Corunna, Michigan 48817

Dear Mayor Sawyer:

SUBJECT: Dam Safety Order, Corunna Dam, Dam ID 379, Shiawassee County

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has determined that a condition exists that poses a serious danger to the Corunna Dam. Specifically, the dam is in poor structural condition and is considered to be a failure in progress. The City of Corunna (City), as owner, must take action to address this threat of dam failure.

The enclosed Dam Safety Inspection Report for the Corunna Dam was prepared by Mr. Jim Pawloski, P.E., of the Dam Safety Program, DEQ. This report was prepared at your request as provided for by Part 315, Dam Safety, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended (NREPA).<sup>1</sup>

The inspection report states in part:

*"The Corunna Dam is in poor condition. Based upon observations at the time of the inspection, the dam is in such poor repair that it could be classified as a failure in progress. The entire structure is submerged during the design flood."*

The Corunna Dam is regulated by Part 315, Dam Safety, of the NREPA. It is classified as a *significant hazard potential dam* per Part 315, which means it is "... a dam located in an area where its failure may cause damage limited to isolated inhabited homes, agricultural buildings, structures, secondary highways, short line railroads or public utilities, where environmental degradation may be significant, or where danger to individuals exists."

Section 31518(7) of Part 315 states:

"If, based on the findings and recommendations of the inspection report and an inspection by the department, the department finds that a condition exists which endangers a dam, it shall order the owner to take actions that the department considers necessary to alleviate the danger."

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<sup>1</sup> Part 315 may be viewed in its entirety on our Web site at [www.michigan.gov/deqdamsafety](http://www.michigan.gov/deqdamsafety).

Due to the poor condition of the Corunna Dam, the DEQ has determined that the actions below are necessary to alleviate the danger. The City is therefore ordered to take the following actions:

1. Draw down the impoundment behind the dam to the maximum extent possible. The drawdown should be targeted to be approximately 6 to 12 inches of water elevation per 24-hour period.

This drawdown will require a permit under Part 301, Inland Lakes and Streams, of the NREPA. The City should apply within five (5) days to the DEQ for a permit to draw down the impoundment.

2. Upon issuance of the permit, immediately begin drawing down the impoundment in accordance with the conditions in the permit.
3. By January 15, 2010, provide a schedule and plan, for DEQ approval, of how the City intends to address the deficiencies at the dam.
4. Implement the approved plan and schedule.

**You are required to submit a written response to this order, which is to be received in this office no later than January 15, 2010.**

A permit application is enclosed for your use, or you may download an MS Word fill-in form from our Web site at [www.michigan.gov/jointpermit](http://www.michigan.gov/jointpermit). You should complete pages 1 and 2 of the application and section 16, *Drawdown of an Impoundment*.

If you would like to meet to discuss this matter or if you have any questions, please contact Mr. Byron Lane, Chief, Dam Safety Program, Land and Water Management Division, at 517-241-9862, or you may contact me.

Sincerely,



David A. Hamilton, P.E., Chief  
Water Management Section  
Land and Water Management Division  
517-335-3174

Enclosures

cc: Lieutenant Michael TerMeer, Shiawassee County Emergency Services  
Mr. Jim Pawloski, DEQ