



October 28, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in support of the application to place Anticosti Island on the Canadian indicative list for a UNESCO World Heritage Site. I strongly support this application.

My interest in Anticosti pertains to the outstanding succession of Ordovician and Silurian sedimentary strata that are exposed across the whole of the island. For many decades, this succession has been one of the three or four most important reference sections for our understanding of the profound changes in climate and biodiversity that took place through Late Ordovician and early Silurian time. The mass extinction event of the Late Ordovician has been documented as the second biggest mass extinction event in Earth history. The extinction event was associated with changes in climate and ocean circulation that, in many ways, mirror the environmental changes and extinctions taking place on Earth today. The only way we can understand the changes that humans are having on the modern world is to understand how the Earth, and life on Earth, have responded to similar environmental changes in the geological past. Given the thick and continuous succession of sedimentary strata, abundance and excellent preservation of fossils belonging to numerous different fossil groups, and wealth of work that has already be done to document these events, Anticosti may be the best natural laboratory in the world for studying this time interval and its profound events of environmental and biotic change. Add to this the excellent exposure of the strata and the amazing natural beauty of those coastal cliffs and river canyons, Anticosti is definitely a significant and unique place of global importance.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Melchin, Ph.D.

Professor

Past-Chair, International Subcommittee on Silurian Stratigraphy