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of the
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Dr. Alex Hukowich
President
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
425 University Avenue, Suite 502
Toronto ON M5G 1T6

Dear Dr. Hukowich:

As you know, I have announced proposed amendments to the Drinking Water System Regulation (O.Reg. 170/03) that will extend the deadline for some systems to install treatment equipment and give the ministry time to consult over the summer months on making the regulation more workable. A copy of the news release is attached for your reference.

The proposed amendments have been posted to the Environmental Registry for a 30-day public-comment period. The posting may be found by visiting the ministry's web site at <http://www.ene.gov.on.ca>, clicking on "Environmental Registry", and searching for RA04E0004 using the "Search Notices" button. I encourage you to submit comments before the comment period ends on June 11, 2004.

The proposed changes will allow the ministry to consult on further changes to the regulation to make compliance more feasible for small waterworks. Ministry staff will be in touch with your organization to make arrangements to get your input.

Our government has also established an Advisory Council on Drinking Water Quality and Testing Standards. The Council will review O.Reg. 170/03 and make recommendations on provincial drinking water standards and other measures to improve the safety and quality of Ontario's drinking water supply.

I look forward to hearing from your organization about this important initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leona Dombrowsky".

Leona Dombrowsky
Minister of the Environment

Attachment



News Release

For immediate release
May 12, 2004

MCGUINITY GOVERNMENT TAKES FURTHER ACTION TO PROTECT ONTARIO'S DRINKING WATER

New advisory council to make recommendations on water quality and testing

TORONTO— The McGuinty government is further protecting Ontario's drinking water by establishing an Advisory Council on Drinking Water Quality and Testing Standards, Environment Minister Leona Dombrowsky announced today.

"Our people's health is our most precious resource. We share a responsibility to protect it from harm," said Dombrowsky. "The Advisory Council will help us ensure that Ontario's standards for drinking water quality and drinking water tests are among the most stringent in the world. Our citizens deserve no less."

The Advisory Council will be chaired by Jim Merritt, a former Assistant Deputy Minister with the Ministry of the Environment.

With members drawn from key professional organizations with expertise in areas related to drinking water, the council will make recommendations to the Minister of the Environment on provincial drinking water standards and other measures to improve the safety and quality of Ontario's drinking water supply.

The establishment and mandate of the Advisory Council satisfy six specific recommendations made by the O'Connor Commission.

In response to concerns raised by rural municipalities, public health officials and small privately-run systems across the province, the minister also announced proposed changes to the Drinking Water Systems Regulation. These proposed changes extend the deadline for some systems to install treatment equipment to December 31, 2004 and will allow the ministry to consult on further changes to the regulation to make compliance more feasible for small waterworks.

“The previous government didn’t consider the effects of the drinking water regulation on rural Ontario,” Dombrowsky said. “We will meet with affected stakeholders over the next few months to come up with solutions that will make the regulation more workable for rural drinking water systems while protecting public health and meeting our commitment to implement all of the O’Connor Commission’s recommendations.”

–30 –

Contact:

Art Chamberlain
Minister’s Office
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John Steele
Ministry of the Environment
(416) 314-6666

See also:

- Media Backgrounder: [Advisory Council on Drinking Water Quality and Testing Standards](#)
- Media Backgrounder: [Proposed Amendments to Drinking Water Systems Regulation \(O. Reg. 170/03\)](#)
- Media Backgrounder: [Members of Advisory Council on Drinking Water Quality and Testing Standards](#)

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<http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/news/2004/051201.htm>

Media Backgrounder

May 12, 2004

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON DRINKING WATER QUALITY AND TESTING STANDARDS

The Advisory Council on Drinking Water Quality and Testing Standards will make recommendations to the Minister of the Environment on matters related to provincial drinking water standards.

Council members are from key professional organizations with expertise in the areas of microbiology, engineering, utility operations and public health and a record of interest and accomplishment in areas related to drinking water. The council will contribute to ensuring Ontario's standards for drinking water quality and testing are consistent with the most up-to-date information and practices, and that the standards-setting process is transparent with increased public input.

The Advisory Council has a mandate to:

- review scientific and technical documentation of proposed standards;
- consult and provide feedback to the public;
- undertake additional consultation to clarify and address issues; and
- consider and make recommendations on adopting standards for contaminants that are not currently being considered through the federal-provincial process for developing Canada-wide drinking water guidelines.

The Advisory Council will first focus on the following priorities:

- replacing the total coliform test with an E. coli test;
- the desirability of a turbidity limit that is lower than the limit specified in the federal-provincial guidelines;
- treatment standards for protozoa based on source water quality; and
- reviewing Ontario's standards for disinfection by-products.

Through the Advisory Council, the McGuinty government is implementing six recommendations (Recommendations 25 to 29 and 31) regarding an advisory council and standards made by Commissioner O'Connor in Part Two of the Walkerton Inquiry report.

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Media Backgrounder

May 12, 2004

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO DRINKING WATER SYSTEMS REGULATION (O. Reg. 170/03)

The Drinking Water System Regulation (O.Reg. 170/03) was implemented in June 2003 to address recommendations of the O'Connor Commission. The ministry has heard from rural municipalities and operators of non-municipal drinking water systems about its impact on their ability to continue to provide services to their clients.

The Ministry of the Environment has proposed amendments to the Drinking Water Systems Regulation which respond to these concerns and give the ministry time to consult over the summer months with rural municipalities and operators of non-municipal drinking water systems, medical officers of health and health officials on making the regulation more workable. The government remains committed to providing safe, clean drinking water, and is prepared to look at workable solutions towards achieving that goal.

The proposed amendments, affecting both municipal and privately-run drinking water systems, are as follows:

- The treatment deadlines will be extended from July 1, 2004 to December 31, 2004 for surface water systems in the three categories listed below, as long as the system does not serve a designated facility (i.e. school or health/social care facility):
 - *non-municipal year-round residential systems* (i.e., mobile home parks, subdivisions, condos/apartments)
 - *large non-municipal – non-residential systems* (i.e., systems serving hotels, resorts and campgrounds with less than 6 hook-ups)
 - *large municipal – non-residential systems* (large community centres and recreational facilities, for example, capable of supplying water at a rate greater than 2.9 litres of per second)

The treatment deadline for groundwater water systems in the three categories listed above remains December 31, 2005.

- *Small municipal – non-residential systems* (i.e., systems serving small community centres and town halls not capable of supplying 2.9 litres of water per second) would be allowed

to post signs until December 31, 2004 rather than conduct tests required by the regulation. Signs would state that the water has not been tested or treated for drinking water purposes.

- *Small non-municipal non-residential systems* (i.e., motels, resorts and restaurants not capable of supply 2.9 litres of water per second) would receive a deadline extension to June 1, 2005 to notify the ministry of their intention to comply, apply for relief from treatment or post warning notices.
- As well, changes have been proposed to the sequence of corrective actions for some adverse test results to better provide for the immediate correction of the problem, and to the definition of 'food premises' to be clear that systems that do not serve the public, such as food manufacturers, are not included in the regulation.

The majority of systems will continue to have to meet tough standards, sample and test, use accredited laboratories for microbiological and chemical testing, provide immediate notification of any adverse test results and are subject to tough penalties for non-compliance.

The proposed amendments have been posted to the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry for a 30-day public comment period which ends June 11, 2004.

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Media Backgrounder

May 12, 2004

MEMBERS OF ADVISORY COUNCIL ON DRINKING WATER QUALITY AND TESTING STANDARDS

Jim Merritt (Chair)

Mr. Merritt is an independent consultant on environmental services, municipal infrastructure and water management. He is a former Assistant Deputy Minister of the Operations Division at the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. Mr. Merritt led the establishment of the Ontario Clean Water Agency and served as Vice President of Operations and Vice President of Information and Technology.

Dr. Robert Andrews

Dr. Andrews is a professor in the department of Civil Engineering at the University of Toronto. He is a past co-recipient of the National Science and Engineering Research Council Synergy Award for University-Industry Partnership. He is a past appointee to the Council of Research Managers — Great Lakes International Joint Commission. Dr. Andrews is a member of the American Water Works Association. He currently serves on the AWWA Disinfection Committee, and on the Ontario Water Works Association's Treatment Committee. He has published technical reports on E.coli occurrence, UV disinfection, Disinfection By-products, among other issues.

Dr. Ronald W. Brecher

Dr. Brecher is Principal and Secretary/Treasurer of GlobalTox International Consultants — a Canadian corporation that assesses the impact of toxic chemical exposures on human health. He is an Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Environmental Studies at the University of Waterloo and Associated Graduate Faculty, Department of Biomedical Sciences at the University of Guelph. From 1994-2002, he was the director of the Children's Groundwater Institute. He is a past recipient of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council's Industrial Research Fellowship. He is a past member of the Science and Policy Advisory Board of the American Council of Science and Health.

Michele Giddings

Ms. Giddings is the Manager, Water Quality and Health Bureau, Healthy Environments & Consumer Safety Branch, Health Canada. She is Health Canada's representative on the