

February 18, 2009

The Honourable David Caplan
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
80 Grosvenor Street
Hepburn Block, 10th Floor,
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Caplan:

Re: Request for Continued 100% Funding for Small Drinking Water Systems

The transfer of oversight responsibility for Small Drinking Water Systems (SDWS) from the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) took place December 1, 2008. Provincial support to local health units for this program is being provided on a 100 percent basis for start-up activities, including an initial planning period followed by a two-year period of conducting initial site-specific risk assessments. After the initial assessments are completed the public health inspector allotment needed is expected to be half of the surge capacity allotment and funding will be cost shared with local municipalities. It is also unknown if this addition to the cost-shared budget will be held under the province's imposed cap on health unit budgets, thus reducing resources for other health unit programs.

Most of these Small Drinking Water Systems are in rural Ontario and many have a decreasing tax base. There are approximately 1440 small drinking water systems within the Simcoe County District (834) and District of Muskoka (606). This represents approximately eight percent of the total in the province and the largest number of any health unit in the province. If this program was still under the Ministry of the Environment it would remain 100 percent provincially funded.

At a meeting on February 18, 2009, the Board of Health for the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) endorsed a motion recommending that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care commit to 100 percent funding for the Small Drinking Water Systems program on an ongoing basis. The board further directed that the Minister of Health, MPs and MPPs in Simcoe Muskoka, aIPHa, Ontario Board of Health and the Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health be so advised.

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I look forward to your response on this matter.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by

Dennis Roughley, Chair
Board of Health

DR:TD:pgc

- c. Linda Stewart, Executive Director, aPHa
Ontario Boards of Health
Simcoe Muskoka MPs
Simcoe Muskoka MPPs
Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health
Warden Tony Guergis and Council, The Corporation of the County of Simcoe
Mayor Ron Stevens and Council, City of Orillia
Mayor Dave Aspden and Council, Corporation of the City of Barrie
Mr. Gord Adams, Chairman, District of Muskoka