

News Release

CLEAN WATER IS THE ONLY GOAL

MANOTICK, July 7, 2006 — Clean, plentiful and safe drinking water for Ontarians is the only goal of the proposed Clean Water Act. The legislation is a direct result of the Walkerton tragedy of 2000 in which seven people died and hundreds of others were made gravely ill right here in Ontario because of contaminated drinking water provided by a municipal system.

Justice Dennis O'Connor headed up an inquiry into the tragedy. One of his key recommendations for avoiding similar catastrophes in the future was to beef up the safety of the water sources from which municipal drinking water is drawn. This extra security measure is known as source water protection (SWP) and will be governed in Ontario by the proposed Clean Water Act now making its way through the provincial legislature.

Source water protection, as set out in the draft Act, is all about protecting the "sources" of municipal drinking water in our area such as rivers, lakes and groundwater.

Conservation Authorities (CAs) across the province will coordinate the SWP process. The CAs' watershed jurisdiction and expertise makes them the ideal groups to bring science-based credibility to the process. Mississippi Valley Conservation and Rideau Valley Conservation Authority have been paired for local SWP purposes.

Recently, we are starting to hear rhetoric suggesting that "the Clean Water Act has nothing to do with clean water" and that further government meddling will result in the loss of the rural way of life. Such statements are quite a stretch and warrant further investigation. We encourage you to read the Act or the summary (called the compendium) and ask questions of the people who are responsible for the Act and accountable for its implementation. More information can be found on the Mississippi-Rideau Source Water website at www.mrsourcewater.ca including a link to the Act on the Ministry of the Environment website.

Many people think the Clean Water Act is an important and smart piece of legislation that will help protect municipal drinking water supplies from contamination. The result is that Carleton Place, Ottawa, Perth and Smiths Falls (relying on local rivers for source water) and Almonte, Carp, Kemptville, Kings Park (Richmond), Merrickville, Munster and Westport (relying on groundwater sources) will have realistic, science-based Source Protection Plans to protect their public drinking water supplies well into the future.

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