



The Ontario Headwaters Institute

Protecting Water
Provincial Planning Policy Branch
Ministry of Municipal Affairs
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PDF via E-mail

With copies to the Ministers of Municipal
Affairs, Environment & Climate Change,
Natural Resources & Forestry, and
Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs

March 7, 2018

**Re: Protecting Water for Future Generations: Growing the Greenbelt in the Outer Ring:
ER Ref 013-1661**

The OHI is a proud partner in a joint submission with the Canadian Environmental Law Association and the Ontario Environment Network.

Informed through a collaborative project called WaterScope that staged 6 meetings across south-central Ontario with 11 local partners and that attracted more than 170 participants, the joint submission supports the earliest inclusion of the 7 study areas into the Greenbelt and further studies on many other candidate areas, particularly those in the proposed Bluebelt as well as suggested expansions in Brant, Niagara, Simcoe, and Peterborough.

In addition, the joint submission provides insight into several deficiencies in how Ontario currently addresses water protection and calls for numerous actions. While we support each and every recommendation in the joint submission, the very nature of lengthy text might cause readers to lose track of their collective impact.

We therefore re-iterate below, in a compact form, 6 of the 17 recommendations to facilitate your understanding of the over-arching need for significant Provincial effort to effort to redress a system with huge gaps and deficiencies. These are:

- **That the Province embark on a participatory process leading to a comprehensive water strategy for all of Ontario;**
- **That the Province use a systems approach to determine the areas of ecological and hydrological significance before considering other provincial interests;**
- **That the Province ensure adequate resources are committed to monitor and implement, and ensure compliance with and enforcement of, any and all government initiatives to protect water for future generations;**
- **That the Province begin prioritizing water protection and ensuring that growth is accommodated by taking an integrated watershed management approach to planning and decisions;**
- **That the Province begin prioritizing water protection and ensuring that other provincial priorities (such as mineral aggregates and infrastructure) are accommodated by taking an integrated watershed management approach to planning and decisions; and**
- **That the Province improve the water management program by:**
 - **Considering the establishment of Regional Water Boards to review water quantity and quality reports, as well as watershed report cards and recommend strategic actions. Such Boards could become, for example, an on-going task of existing Source Protection Committees.**

To help you appreciate the degree to which people are informed and concerned about the state of Ontario's water, we urge you to read the Proceedings of the six meetings held by WaterScape.

While a hyperlink to the Proceedings can be found at <http://ontarioheadwaters.ca/blog/>, please note we will be forwarding a hard copy of the Proceedings to the Ministers involved in this initiative.

The Proceedings make abundantly clear that Ontario has serious challenges in the public mind with respect to its efforts to protect water. Either you are doing a great job that no one understands, or you are not doing even a passable job.

As the truth may lie somewhere in the middle, we think that the Province should, in addition to seriously considering the 17 recommendations in the joint publication, both:

- A. Expand its efforts at public education on the importance of clean water to all living things, watershed management, and water conservation; and,
- B. Demonstrate a significantly greater commitment to protecting water across Ontario.

Sincerely,

Andrew McCammon

Executive Director
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ccs Ministers and staff involved in PWFG; other selected individuals and organizations