

Pw-C1-1

For Information

DATE: May 23, 2011

REPORT TITLE: **DRINKING WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT STANDARD OF CARE
COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES**

FROM: Dan Labrecque, Commissioner of Public Works

OBJECTIVE

To inform and advise Members of Council of their responsibility under the Ontario *Safe Drinking Water Act's* statutory Standard of Care.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Council members are legal owners of Peel municipal drinking water systems.
- Council has an important role to ensure Peel has access to safe, high quality drinking water and, under the *Safe Drinking Water Act*, is legally required to do so.
- Council members can become more informed on their drinking water responsibilities through the Ministry of the Environment's new Standard of Care Program, designed to assist municipal decision makers in the execution of their responsibilities.
- The delivery of safe, high quality drinking water is a key driver for the water system state of good repair and effective asset management.

DISCUSSION

1. Background (Council Responsibility)

Numerous changes to the Ontario *Safe Drinking Water Act* (Act) over the past several years have culminated in a myriad of new requirements for municipal drinking water system owners and operators. For Peel systems, Peel Regional Council, and its members, are cited as the 'Owner' of Peel's drinking water systems. As owner, Council members are responsible overseers of Peel's municipal drinking water systems and must ensure they are informed and prepared to make decisions to support a state of good repair, effective asset management and risk management of the water infrastructure.

Under the Act the Standard of Care requires that Council be diligent in the oversight of Peel's drinking water systems, maintain awareness of the impact of drinking water related decisions on public health, and be aware of the legal responsibilities for drinking water systems.

With the assistance of municipal mayors and councillors, the Ontario Ministry of Environment has developed a Guidance Program to assist municipal Councils to

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understand their oversight responsibilities for drinking water. The program provides access to an informative web site, guidance materials and training courses provided by the Walkerton Clean Water Centre. A copy of the Ministry of the Environment's 'Taking Care of Your Drinking Water, A Guide for Members of Municipal Councils' is attached as Appendix I to this report.

a) Peel Staff Responsibility

Peel employees are vested with the same responsibilities as Council and are required to ensure a Drinking Water Quality Management System is in place at all times and in accordance with provincial regulations.

Peel is currently in the process of obtaining final Accreditation for its drinking water systems. Obtaining an Accreditation requires the development of Operational and Financial Plans which collectively address elements such as due diligence towards Education and Awareness, Continuous Improvement, Risk Management, State of Good Repair and Consistent Management Review, among others.

The Accreditation external audit of Peel's drinking water systems and Operational Plan was conducted in April 2011 by the Ministry of the Environment's authorized audit and accreditation body, the Canadian General Standards Board. Under the *Safe Drinking Water Act*, this Accreditation provides for municipal drinking water licensing, requiring Operation and Financial Plans renewal every five years.

Peel staff are in various stages of developing and implementing programs that support requirements within the Drinking Water Quality Management System. These include:

- developing an asset management framework and technical levels of service
- undertaking infrastructure risk assessment and redundancy studies
- developing and conducting self audit programs; reviewing and identifying critical areas within the infrastructure system
- reviewing and improving current best practices and processes for financial planning
- information management
- compliance management.

Peel staff are responsible for ensuring that drinking water system owners and operators, including Council, are educated and aware of the responsibilities of the oversight of drinking water systems.

2. Proposed Direction

This is the first of a series of Council reports that will provide information on the Standard of Care requirements of Peel and Council members in the delivery of municipal drinking water. Subsequent reports to Council will include:

- updates on the Drinking Water Quality Management program and Peel's licensing and accreditation status
- Infrastructure Asset Management and risk management initiatives, including an asset management framework
- technical levels of service standards
- continuous improvement initiatives

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These reports will support the standard of care component of the Safe Drinking Water Act and state of good repair of Peel's water infrastructure


CONCLUSION

The Region of Peel and its Council members are required under the Safe Drinking Water Act to observe the statutory Standard of Care in the execution of providing oversight for Peel's drinking water systems to ensure safety and high quality drinking water. Peel staff supports this Standard of Care through the development of the Drinking Water Quality Management System, a renewable Five Year Financial Plan, a Self Audit Program, an Education and Awareness Program, Asset Management Framework and Technical Levels of Service and Risk Assessment Plans. Peel Council's understanding of these responsibilities will assist in decision making on initiatives that affect the quality of Peel's municipal drinking water systems.




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Commissioner of Public Works

Approved for Submission:



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