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News Release

For immediate release

April 10, 2003

EVES GOVERNMENT INTRODUCES TOUGHER RULES FOR WELL CONSTRUCTION AND DECOMMISSIONING \$830,000 in new funding for well construction training, pilot program

TORONTO — The Ernie Eves government has introduced tougher rules for well construction and decommissioning and higher performance standards for well technicians, Environment Minister Chris Stockwell announced today.

The government also announced \$600,000 in new funding for Sir Sandford Fleming College to support training costs for those who construct wells. The three-year funding agreement means that course participants will only have to pay \$300 for a 10-day course.

"These tougher rules will help protect the quality of groundwater for more than three million Ontarians who rely on private and municipal wells," said Stockwell. "By assisting well construction technicians with their training costs, we are helping to quickly make Ontario a leading jurisdiction in North America for well construction and decommissioning."

The Ontario government is amending and updating its Wells Regulation (O. Reg. 903). The new rules include mandatory training and continuing education for those who construct wells, tougher standards for well construction and decommissioning, and placement of well tags on all new wells. For the first time in Ontario, there are clear requirements for the construction and decommissioning of test holes and de-watering wells in order to protect groundwater.

The government also announced today that it will provide the City of Ottawa with \$230,000 to support a pilot project for municipal well inspections. From June 15, 2003 to January 15, 2004, well owners will be able to voluntarily request an inspection of their new well.

These initiatives are part of the government's clean water strategy to improve

water quality and water delivery in Ontario. The province has invested \$2.85 million to support wells research, continuing education for well technicians and well owner education.

The requirements meet Commissioner Dennis O'Connor's recommendations that the Wells Regulation be reviewed and updated if necessary to ensure that it requires best construction practices, and that it provides the public with information about how to supply water safely.

Detailed information is available for both well technicians and well owners on the ministry's Web site at www.ene.gov.on.ca or by calling its Public Information Centre at (416) 325-4000 or 1-800-565-4923.

The regulation is posted for 30 days on the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry website, found at http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env_reg/ebr/english.

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