

Sarah Miller

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Cc: Taylor, Robert (MNR); Messervey, Rob (MNR); Hunter, Leith (MNR); Thompson, Paula (MNR); Rayner, Joy (MNR); Flagal, Jamie (ENE); Schwartz, Risa (ENE); Dobrin, Dan (ENE); Lompart, Chris (ENE); Cosco, Caroline (ENE); Taylor, Brent (ENE); Di Maio, Joanne (ENE); Bailey, Sharon (ENE); Ollen-Bittle, Alla (MNR)

Subject: Safeguarding and Sustaining Ontario's Water Resources - Bill 198

On April 3, 2007, Environment Minister Laurel Broten and Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay announced the introduction of Bill 198: Safeguarding and Sustaining Ontario's Water Act, which would implement the historic Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement and enable the Government to charge commercial and industrial users for the water they take and use.

We want to take this opportunity to update you on recent progress since the bill was introduced. On April 12th the Bill proceeded to Second Reading, with debate continuing on April 17th and 18th. On May 9th the Standing Committee on Justice Policy held public hearings on the bill, while on May 16th the committee voted on proposed amendments and the bill was ordered for Third Reading.

Following the hearings of the Standing Committee the Ontario government filed a number of proposed amendments to the bill to respond to the issues raised by stakeholders and the public. Some of the more significant proposed amendments include:

- Regulation-making power to provide additional flexibility to require that water be returned to the source Great Lake watershed, for water transfers between Great Lakes watersheds, in addition to those specified in the bill. The Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement requires that water be returned to the source Great Lake watershed for transfers of 19 million litres per day consumptive use or more.
- Flexibility to require water users to prepare and implement water conservation plans.
- Requiring the environment minister to seek public comment on what actions the government should take in response to periodic Basin-wide assessments of cumulative impacts, including climate change, and to make a statement that summarizes the actions that the government intends to take in response to the assessment. This goes beyond the agreement commitments related to assessing these impacts.

The proposed changes to Bill 198 would provide even greater protection and conservation for the waters of the Great Lakes Basin. We want to thank those of you who provided comments on the bill or participated in the public hearings. We look forward to continuing to work with you to implement the legislation, should it be enacted.

For additional information please refer to the following links:

Bill 198: http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=1562.

Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement:
<http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/mnr/water/greatlakes/>

Water Conservation Charges Proposal EBR Notice: <http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/>
(search for EBR Registry Number: 010-0162, or search by title: Water Conservation Charges)

18/05/2007

Proposal). Comments on this EBR posting can still be submitted until June 4, 2007.

The Ministries would appreciate your assistance in sharing this information with other potentially interested parties.

If you have any questions or would like further information please feel free to contact either of us.

Thank you,

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