
Ministry of Natural Resources Ministère des Richesses naturelles

December 7, 2007

Mr. David Naftzger, Secretary
Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Basin Regional Body
c/o Council of Great Lakes Governors
35 East Wacker Drive, Suite 1850
Chicago, Illinois 60601
USA

Dear Mr. Naftzger:

RE: Adoption of Regional Water Conservation and Efficiency Objectives

Over the past two years, the Ontario government has participated as co-chair of the Council of Great Lakes Governors' Water Conservation Committee (Committee), mandated to develop a set of Regional Water Conservation and Efficiency Objectives by December 13, 2007 (as required under the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement).

During the development process, stakeholders, Tribes and First Nations have provided valuable advice and input. Following the August 17, 2007 release of the draft objectives, Ontario posted the objectives on the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry for further public input and we have assessed the input received.

During our Regional Body meeting on December 4, 2007, where I participated as the Regional Body designate of Premier McGuinty, I confirmed Ontario's support of the Regional Water Conservation and Efficiency Objectives as drafted on August 17, 2007. However, I would like to take this opportunity to note a number of key concerns that our stakeholders have continued to raise throughout the review process, including the most recent public Environmental Bill of Rights posting and consultation process. These concerns include:

- The level of detail (stronger measures with targets requested by some and others wanting flexibility for jurisdictional development);
- The definition of conservation (objectives seem "end of pipe" oriented). Stakeholders seek expansion of the definition to include natural landscape measures);
- The potential burden of the costs associated with implementation; and,
- The process for assessing effectiveness of objectives in jurisdictions is not clear.

I would like to suggest that, in order to address the concerns raised in Ontario, the Regional Body work together to develop a foundation for assessing the progress of jurisdictions after the first five years of implementation. This is a critical component not addressed in the document, and it is unclear as to what will be evaluated to measure the success of our conservation and efficiency efforts.

Ontario will now be turning to develop our provincial water conservation and efficiency goals, objectives and program, and we will be working closely with our stakeholders, First Nations, and the public to ensure we meet the Objectives outlined.

I look forward to working with your staff and the other jurisdictions on a framework for regional evaluation.

Thank you for your leadership on this initiative.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Kevin J. Wilson
Assistant Deputy Minister
Natural Resource Management Division