Ontario

news release

Ministry
of the
Environment

February 2, 1993

COMPREHENSIVE CLEAN WATER REGULATION FOR ONTARIO'S PULP AND PAPER INDUSTRY

Environment Minister Ruth Grier today released a comprehensive clean water regulation targeting a wide range of substances from Ontario's 26 pulp and paper mills, including organochlorines. New stringent limits will greatly reduce those chemicals that pose a threat to human health and the environment. Ontario's goal is for a zero discharge of organochlorines by 2002.

"We must safeguard health. More than 30 million people, 6 million in Ontario, depend on the Great Lakes for their drinking water. The Great Lakes can no longer sustain this kind of toxic overload," Mrs. Grier said.

Pulp and paper mills are responsible for more than 90 per cent of the organochlorines -- a family of chlorine-based chemicals that includes known cancer-causing agents -- discharged into the Great Lakes and Ontario's waterways.

"To protect the Great Lakes' ecosystem, our economic and community well-being, we must act now. This pulp and paper regulation is both progressive and practical. By eliminating organochlorines in stages, we have addressed industry's requests for practical timeframes and long-term certainty so it can plan for its future investments," Mrs. Grier said.

In its 1992 report on the Great Lakes, the International Joint Commission stated that organochlorines are "dangerous to the environment, deleterious to the human condition, and can no longer be tolerated in the ecosystem, whether or not unassailable scientific proof of acute or chronic damage is universally accepted."

"Pollution prevention is the foundation for this new clean water regulation," added Mrs. Grier. "It furthers the Ontario government's commitment to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement's principle of zero discharge of persistent toxic substances. This includes the binational Lake Superior program which is designed to protect the integrity of our largest great lake. The clean water regulation will help meet the goal of the Remedial Action Plans in the eight toxic hot spots around the lakes affected by pulp and paper mill pollution."

"In addition to significant reductions, the pulp and paper industry is required to plan for the elimination of chlorine. It will lead Ontario into the 21st century with cleaner water by eliminating some toxic substances and reducing others by close to 100 per cent within three years," Mrs. Grier added.

Natural Resources Minister Bud Wildman said, "We recognize the challenge this new regulation poses for our forest industry. We will be discussing with them how to develop new technologies to meet those challenges. We must work together to ensure the environmental and economic sustainability of our industry, our resources and our communities."

All four categories of pulp and paper mills (kraft, sulphite/mechanical, corrugating, de-inking/board/fine papers/tissue) must meet the limits proposed in the regulation for all substances. Compared to 1990, a number of substances will be reduced dramatically by 1995, including:

. chloroform, 96 per cent reduction
. phenol, 88 per cent reduction
. Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), 84 per cent reduction
. toluene, 83 per cent reduction

"The government understands that this is a period of transition for the industry as it restructures for sustainability and moves towards a greener future. We will continue to work with companies. Indeed, we will enhance our support as they research new technologies and new processes," Mrs. Grier said.

The regulation includes limits that must be met by 1995 for the following substances: Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), total suspended solids, total phosphorus, chloroform, toluene, phenol, 2,3,7,8-TCDD (dioxins) and 2,3,7,8-TCDF (furans). Discharges from pulp and paper mills will also have to meet a stringent toxicity test: the wastewaters must be safe enough for fish to survive.

In addition, the limit of organochlorine discharge for the eight kraft mills, measured by AOX *, is set at 1.5 kilograms/tonne of pulp by Dec. 31, 1995 and at 0.8 kilogram/tonne of pulp by Dec. 31, 1999. In order to achieve the goal of zero discharge of AOX by 2002, the kraft mills must also submit AOX Elimination Plans to the government under the following schedule:

- initial AOX Elimination Plans to be produced 6 months after regulation is passed
- interim plans by Dec. 31, 1995 and
- final AOX Elimination Plans by Dec. 31, 1998.

All kraft mills in Ontario are currently operating at levels below the 2.5 kilograms/tonne limit of AOX as required by existing control orders.

The draft limit regulations, which were developed through a consultative process that began in 1986 under the MISA program (Municipal/Industrial Strategy for Abatement), are available for a 60-day public comment and review period.

Copies of the Draft Effluent Limits Regulations for the Pulp and Paper Sector (PIBS #2100) and supporting technical materials including backgrounders and reports (see attached list) can be obtained by calling the Ministry of the Environment's Public Information Centre at (416) 323-4321.

* AOX : Adsorbable Organic Halides, an analytical method for measuring all organochlorines collectively rather than individually. Organochlorines are a family of carbon-based compounds bound by chlorine atoms.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Madeleine McLaughlin (416) 323-4443; Communications Adviser to the Minister

Joyce McLean (416) 323-4364; Minister's Office

Gerry Merchant (416) 323-4333; Public Affairs and Communications Services Branch

** version française disponible

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

- Draft Development Document For the Pulp and Paper Sector Effluent Limit Regulation, 250 pages.

  Report describes the steps involved in the development of limits for the Pulp and Paper Sector and contains the draft regulation and the background technical information used to develop the draft regulation

- Protocol for Conducting A Storm Water Control Study, 10 pages.

  The protocol describes the role and responsibilities of the discharger in preventing contaminants from escaping through stormwater runoff and the requirements that must be followed in conducting a stormwater control study

- Protocol for Sampling and Analysis of Industrial/Municipal Wastewater, 150 pages.

  Outlines procedures to be followed by industry when sampling and analyzing effluent under MISA regulations.

BACKGROUND MATERIAL:

- Clean Waters for Ontario: Municipal/Industrial Strategy for Abatement Overview, (PIBS #2100), 4 pages.

- Clean Water Regulation: Pulp and Paper Sector, 8 pages.