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End of the Line

Ontario municipalities can and should take action to completely remove toxic lead pipes from their drinking water systems.

CELA released a report this month urging Ontario municipalities to stop conducting partial lead service line replacements. These occur when the portion of lead pipe on public property is replaced and then re-attached to the old lead line if the property owner does not pay to complete the replacement.

Lead service lines are the primary contributor to high lead levels in residential drinking water. No amount of lead is safe. **Ontario municipalities can and should work towards a lead-free future.**

Read the full report: [End of the Line: A better way to get lead out of municipal drinking water](#)



CELA staff member Julie Mutis made a deputation to the City of Toronto Planning and Housing Committee this week, calling for an end to the practice of partial lead service line replacements. In response, Council passed a motion directing staff to consider the use of regulatory tools to address the issue of lead pipes on private property. We are pleased to see the City of Toronto taking positive action to protect people - especially children - from the harmful effects of lead.



Earlier this month, Julie attended a school safety event in Toronto and talked to teachers about the importance of removing lead from school drinking water.

Casework

Civil Action Launched Against Waste Transfer Site: On behalf of a local resident, CELA recently commenced a civil action in relation to a waste transfer site in southeastern Ontario. The claim is based in negligence and private nuisance, and alleges that our client is experiencing negative off-site impacts from operational activity at the waste transfer site located beside her

property, including excessive noise, vibration, odour, dust, vermin, litter, and surface water run-off.

Federal Impact Assessment Requested for Dresden Waste Facility: Earlier this year, Schedule 3 of Ontario Bill 5 controversially amended the Environmental Assessment Act in order to exempt a proposed waste disposal/recycling facility in Dresden, Ontario from the legal requirement to conduct a Comprehensive Environmental Assessment. On behalf of a local citizens group that opposes the large-scale proposal on environmental grounds, CELA recently filed submissions requesting the federal government designate the proposed facility as a project subject to the *Impact Assessment Act* in light of potential adverse effects on areas of federal jurisdiction. Similar designation requests have been filed by the Municipality of Chatham-Kent and an Indigenous organization. However, this designation request was recently refused by the President of the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.

New Litigation on behalf of Grassy Narrows First Nation: On behalf of Grassy Narrows First Nation, CELA and Cavalluzzo LLP have recently commenced an application for judicial review of a provincial refusal to issue administrative orders to address contaminants entering a river system that flows into our client's territory. Among other things, the application alleges that in light of evidence confirming ongoing discharges of sulphate which facilitates formation of harmful methylmercury within the watercourse, it was unreasonable for the provincial Director to fail or refuse to exercise his statutory authority to issue a stop order and/or control order against the contaminant source pursuant to the Environmental Protection Act. A hearing date for the judicial review application has not yet been set by Ontario's Divisional Court.

Law Reform

Fast-Tracking of Bill 56 and Changes to Drinking Water Protections: The provincial government's omnibus bill (Bill 56, Building a More Competitive Economy Act, 2025) passed yesterday after being rushed through legislature.

Fast-tracking the Bill with no referral to committee means there was no opportunity for the public to provide comments, appear as witnesses or suggest amendments.

It also means the government is not able to consider public comments on open consultations related to the Bill, including two active postings currently on the Environmental Registry of Ontario. The postings, with closing dates of November 19th and December 4th, respectively, deal with proposed changes to the *Clean Water Act* and the *Safe Drinking Water Act*.

Despite the premature passing of the Bill, CELA will assess and comment on the postings, which could impact policy and regulations that protect Ontarians drinking water.

“One Project, One Review”: CELA and other environmental groups filed a joint submission to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada expressing concern that the proposed approach would lead to near-complete abdication of a federal role in impact assessment, and risks environmental disasters, litigation, or protest.

Protect Hamilton Tenants: Extreme heat is a growing issue for tenants. For years, tenants have been raising the alarm on unsafe conditions in rental housing during the hot summer months. Currently, there are no laws provincially or municipally requiring active cooling or that indoor temperatures do not exceed a maximum temperature. If you live in Hamilton, add your support to this petition, supported by ACORN Hamilton, CELA, Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, Environment Hamilton, and the Low Income Energy Network, calling for a maximum heat by-law.

Events and Resources



On the Road: CELA staff were pleased to present at the 2nd annual Canada Home Energy Justice Conference in Ottawa to discuss the topic of maximum heat by-laws across the province.

Legal and Policy Levers to Improve Indoor Air Quality in Learning

Settings: As the evidence continues to mount about the harmful health effects of poor indoor air quality (IAQ), especially on children, attention is turning to the environments where children spend much of their day: schools and child care settings, whether facility or home-based. CELA and the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and the Environment (CPCHE) co-published an environmental scan of IAG support programs in learning settings. Author Krystal Roussel summarizes the results and recommendations in a [new blog](#).

Fact sheets - Environmental Penalties to Fund Community-led Projects:

At the federal and provincial level, there are funds that collect the money paid by offenders that are found to have violated federal or provincial environmental legislation. Federally, this is the Environmental Damages Fund (EDF) and provincially, this is the Ontario Community Environment Fund (OCEF). CELA has fact sheets about these funds available in [English](#) and [French](#).

Do you have an environmental law issue you need help with? Know someone else who does? Learn more about [how CELA can help](#).

Support Our Work:

The Canadian Environmental Law Foundation raises funds to support environmental research, education, and access-to-justice initiatives.

In addition, the Foundation works to preserve and make accessible the history of environmental law in Canada so that future generations can learn from the past. This includes our digital and physical library and archival holdings.

Your gift today will help mentor the next generation of environmental lawyers and sustain the research and education needed to ensure environmental law continues to evolve.

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From the Foundation

October Feature: This month's feature from the Canadian Environmental Law Archive is the 2001 submission of the Concerned Walkerton Citizens and CELA to the Walkerton Inquiry. Titled "Tragedy on Tap", the submission explains why Ontario needs a *Safe Drinking Water Act*.

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