About the BluMetric report
(Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks summary)

Background

Ontario is taking action through our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan to protect our lakes, waterways and groundwater supply, now and for future generations. That is why, in December 2019, we extended the moratorium on new or increasing water takings from groundwater sources by water bottling facilities for nine months to complete our analysis of the water quantity review of the province's water taking policies, programs, and science tools.

To ensure our water quantity management review was comprehensive, we retained an independent third-party water expert and consultant, BluMetric Environmental Inc., in December 2017 to complete an assessment of water resources in the province. This review focused on areas potentially vulnerable to the cumulative effects of multiple water users, drought, climate change, population growth or changing land use (see Fig. 1). BluMetric completed a report with their findings in 2019.

BluMetric's findings, along with the ministry's own review of the province's water taking policies, programs, and science tools, confirmed that water takings for bottling are managed sustainably in Ontario under existing legislation, regulation and guidance. The findings also helped inform the government's proposed enhancements to Ontario's water taking program.

Ontario's proposed enhancements include:

- Requiring water bottling companies to have the support of their host municipalities for new and increasing bottled water takings, with an exemption for small businesses.
- Establishing priorities of water use in the province that can guide water taking decisions.
- Assessing and managing multiple water takings together in areas of the province where water sustainability is a concern.
- Making water taking data available to the public to increase transparency of how Ontario manages water resources.

Ontario will continue to engage with the public, stakeholders and Indigenous communities for input on how we manage provincial water taking to ensure the safety of secure, reliable sources of water.

These proposed changes are available on the Environmental Registry for public comment until August 2, 2020.

Below is a summary of BluMetric's report.

Fig. 1 BluMetric Report Contents

BluMetric Report Contents		
Section	**Content**	**# Pages**
Science Review	• Review and summary of the best available science and scientific practices on key issues (e.g., cumulative impacts, ecological flow needs) relating to water quantity resources. • Analysis and key findings outlined in summary table.	35
Jurisdictional Review	• Review of policies and best management practices in Canada, Great Lakes states and select international jurisdictions on key aspects of water quantity management. • Key findings and analysis outlined in text and tables.	310
Ontario Water Managers Workshops	• Outcomes of workshops with select water resource managers from Ontario's municipalities, conservation authorities and First Nations that were set up to share science and jurisdictional review findings and to seek input on needs and suitability for use in Ontario. • Group feedback, summary and key takeaways from the water resource managers.	272
Lessons Learned	• High-level information based on insights gained by BluMetric during the project for consideration by the ministry as part of its review of its Water Quantity Framework (programs, policies and science).	95
Water <u>Quantity</u> Study Area (WQSA) Assessments	• Review of the current and future sustainability of water resources and water resource management in seven areas. • Conclusions and gaps in science for individual study areas. • Science and program recommendations for individual study areas and consolidated recommendations.	877 (including 182 pages on 3 Guelph water bottlers)
Water <u>Bottling</u> Study Area (WBSA) Assessments	• Review of potential impact of seven individual water bottling takings on the environment and other water users, and the sustainability of groundwater resources around the taking. • Conclusions and gaps in science for individual bottling takings. • Recommendations on addressing science gaps for bottlers and all permitted and non-permitted takers.	305