



Ontario Ground Water Association

750 Talbot Street, St. Thomas, ON N5P 1E2
Phone: 519-245-7194 Fax: 519-245-7196 E-mail: ogwa@ogwa.ca Web: www.ogwa.ca

November 26th, 2019

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1952 - 53 Wilfred Field
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1965 - 66 Bill Dale
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Naomi Herold
Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
Environmental Policy Branch
40 St Clair Avenue West
Floor 10
Toronto, ON
M4V 1M2

Re: Environmental Registry posting #013-1513

Dear Naomi,

The Ontario Ground Water Association (OGWA) representing most Licenced Water Well Contractors and Technicians in the Province of Ontario thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the Wells Regulation under the Ontario Water Resources Act.

As you know the OGWA endeavours to protect and promote Ontario's most precious resource. It is always our desire to make things better and to work with the MECP to that end.

The OGWA supports the proposed amendments to the Wells Regulation as detailed in ERO – 013-1513. The efforts to reduce the administrative burden on our members is welcome however the OGWA believes maintaining protections for the environment, human health, safety and consumers are paramount.

In the MECP's efforts to modify minimum insurance requirements for licensed well contractors the OGWA feels that these changes should require the addition of pollution liability insurance coverage. The OGWA would support this change.

In our telephone conversation with other Ministry staff Tuesday Nov. 19th, it was mentioned that the Ministry intends to increase the costs of licensing. The OGWA heartily supports this initiative which I stated on the call. It is the OGWA's position that licenses are currently monetarily undervalued. This can lead to several situations which in turn become issues with quality of workmanship that end in non-compliance with the regulation and substandard environmental protection. Our geotechnical drillers complain of larger and larger companies as clients who are more and more focused on profit and in turn savings for their clients. It is most important that the holders of these licenses, contractors and technicians alike value their licenses sufficiently enough that they will stand up to pressures put on them to circumvent the regulation due to the demands of their clients. The OGWA has also discussed with concern the large multinational corporations where the Licensed Contractor would be hard placed to pick his Licensed Technicians out of a line up. We support all efforts that add value and accountability to both Contractors and Technicians licenses.

"Dedicated to protecting and promoting Ontario's most precious resource."

Further to this discussion on licenses it is the OGWA's recommendation that the exemption of CETs and PGOs from Class 5 should be removed and they should in fact be required to hold Class 5 Well Technician Licenses.

The OGWA would also recommend changes to the current situation around Continuing Education (CE) credits for Licensed Well Technicians. The Ministry should broaden the scope of topics for CE courses. The OGWA's concern is that the current focus on Ont. Reg. 903 and the Best Management Practices Manual is too narrow. The business acumen of many of the contractors and technicians is very diverse and, in some cases, lacking. Efforts to bring all licencees to the same level of communication skills and cost accounting would be a start. It is our position that when drillers are unable to maintain profitability it is adherence to the regulation that suffers first. One driller in area not charging enough to properly comply with the regulation drags all the drillers nearby trying to compete down to that level of noncompliance. Good businesspeople = good drillers/profits = adherence to Ont. Reg. 903. The OGWA also proposes a review of the "on-line courses" be executed. Currently we know of licencees who have taken the same on-line course numerous times. We also have experienced what we believe are support (office) staff completing courses on behalf of their employers. Both scenarios defeat the premise of "continuing education". This is also very unfair to those who spend 7 hours in a different CE class each year.

Lastly the OGWA would like to suggest reopening discussions with the Ministry around the OGWA's participation in the regulatory process on water wells especially with inspection and compliance issues. The OGWA understands the Ministry is held to "Complaint Driven Enforcement" due to budgetary constraints. We discussed on our telephone call how frustrating it is for the OGWA that we come across so many consumers who should complain or should have complained but have no idea they have cause. The "cleanup" of a complaint situation is often costly and rarely 100% satisfactory. Serially under performing contractors must be prevented from doing any further damage to consumers and the environment. The OGWA believes we can offer the Province a service. Education of the licencees, the consumers and the inspection of the contractors' product would stop any new situations from being created. A certification program for wells and pumping systems during real estate transactions would prevent nightmares from being sold and passed on. Referrals for enforcement would be made to the MECP and then executed by Provincial Officers. The OGWA would very much like to explore talks along these lines at the MECP's convenience.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the Wells Regulation. In our continued desire to make things better I look forward to further discussions with the Ministry.

Sincerely,



Executive Director, Ontario Ground Water Association

Cc: Matthew D. Wilson, President - OGWA