



Sunday, September 27, 2020

Erinn Lee
Policy Analyst Intern
Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks,
135 St. Clair Avenue West, 1st Floor,
Toronto, ON M4V 1P5

Dear Ms. Lee,

RE: Proposal – Proposal to Extend the Current Moratorium on Water Bottling Permits – Environmental Registry Notice #019-2319

The City of Guelph (City) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposal to extend the current moratorium on water bottling permits (the "Proposal"). The Province of Ontario (Province) is proposing to extend the moratorium to April 1, 2021 to give time for the Province to thoroughly review and consider feedback received and further engage on how the Province can implement the proposed enhancements to Ontario water taking program. This Proposal is complementary to the recent proposal to update Ontario's Water Quantity Management Framework under the Ontario Water Resources Act and in particular, the PTTW process under Environmental Registry of Ontario Notice 019-1340. The City is in support of the proposal to extend the moratorium to April 1, 2021.

The City has a keen interest in the efforts of the Province and the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) to manage water takings to protect the long-term sustainability of Ontario's water resources. The City's interests are primarily with respect to protection of the water resources in and around the City of Guelph that are used as sources of municipal drinking water. For water supply purposes, the City has numerous Permits to Take Water (PTTW) for groundwater wells and wellfields, a groundwater collection system and a surface water taking on the Eramosa River.

We are in receipt of the Environmental Registry of Ontario Notice 019-2319 and the Proposal to extend the current moratorium on water bottling permits. Please find below our comments on the Proposal. We note that the Proposal gives the Province time to review submissions from ERO 019-1340 as well as to further consult with the public, stakeholders and Indigenous communities on the proposed enhancements to the water taking process. The City provided detailed comments on the ERO 019-1340 Proposal and these comments should be consulted for the City's position and recommendations for water quantity management in Ontario. It is the City's expectation that the Province will provide more information on the

enhancements through additional consultations and further postings to the ERO. As a result, these comments may be subject to further detail or clarification as more information is provided by the Province.

General Comments with Respect to Water Quantity Management in Ontario

The Province's review of water bottling operations was first initiated in the fall of 2016 and the moratorium on water bottling permits was initiated on January 1, 2017. Throughout the three-year process and for all related ERO postings, the City has continued to advocate for due process in review and consultation of proposals and the application of best available science in the Province's review of water quantity management in Ontario.

In ERO 019-2319, the Province has referenced changes to the water taking program through revisions to the Water Taking and Transfer Regulation as well as development of draft guidance to support implementation of the proposals. Based on high level Proposal provided in ERO 019-2319, the City would expect the Province to later release draft regulations and guidance containing more information for both proposals and we would appreciate the opportunity to provide detailed comments at that time.

Like other water takers, bottled water permits are required to demonstrate sustainability through PTTW applications and ongoing monitoring and renewal of permits. It is recommended that the Province continue investments into groundwater and surface water modelling tools such as the Tier 3 models developed in Ontario's Source Protection Program and in enhanced public accessibility to information maintained by the MECP to best inform these decisions. In addition, similar processes should be applied to all permit applications for similar reasons: to ensure sustainability of water quantity management in Ontario.

It is the City's opinion that approval of bottled water permits should be based on best science in consideration of priority of use with recognition of the water resource needs for future municipal population and employment growth targets imposed by the Province (i.e., Places to Grow and growth targets to 2051). At this time water bottling permits local to Guelph are considered to be sustainable under existing conditions but imposed growth and water resource needs may lead to sustainability challenges in the future.

As the Province continues its review of proposed water quantity management, including potential approval authorities of municipal councils for bottled water PTTWs, added clarification is needed on the definition, roles and responsibilities of the "host municipality" where upper and lower tier municipalities and councils exist. Again, it is the City's view that the best science and growth-based future resource planning needs should prevail in the evaluation of potential new water takings.



As the Province considers an area-based approach to water takings where water sustainability is an issue, the City recommends that the Province apply cumulative effects and sustainability assessments using Tier 3 water budget models to ensure that municipal water supply requirements are not reduced.

Finally, the City recommends that the Province further consult municipal governments like Guelph on potential changes related to the water taking program as additional elements and details are proposed. The City of Guelph would welcome the opportunity to provide more specific feedback on the water taking program to enhance water quantity management in Ontario with the goal of ensuring sustainable water supplies and a prosperous economy.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Rose, General Manager

Environmental Services, **Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise**

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