

A satellite-style map of Ontario, Canada, showing the province's geographical features, including the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River. The text is overlaid on the map.

***Ontario First Nations Technical Services
Corporation (OFNTSC) Annual Conference***

***Ministry of the Environment - Land and Water
Policy Branch***

Water Policy Update

August 24, 2010

The Ministry of the Environment (MOE)

Who we are and What do we do?

Our Vision:

- Is an Ontario with clean and safe air, land and water that contributes to healthy communities, ecological protection and environmentally sustainable development for present and future generations.

Our Statement of Environmental Values:

- Outlines principles which guide the Ministry's decision making processes on how we protect the **air, land and water:**

"...when making decisions that might significantly affect the environment, the Ministry will provide opportunities for involvement of Aboriginal peoples whose interests may be affected by such decisions, so that Aboriginal interests can be appropriately considered."

MOE has three key roles which achieve the ministry's vision and protect Ontario's air, land and water:

1. **Laws & Policy**
2. **Approvals, Compliance & Enforcement**
3. **Monitoring**



Ministry of the Environment

Taking an Ecosystem Approach

- The Ministry adopts an ecosystem approach to environmental protection and resource management. This approach views the ecosystem as composed of air, land, water and living organisms, including humans, and the interactions among them.
- We consider the effects of our decisions on current and future generations; consistent with sustainable development practices.
- We also take a precautionary, science-based approach in our decision-making to protect human health and the environment.



Ministry of the Environment

Managing Water Resources

- Protecting, conserving and managing the water that flows into the lakes, rivers and streams as well as the water that lies in aquifers below is one of our most important and challenging priorities.
- This includes protecting and managing the Great Lakes as the largest systems of fresh surface water in the world.



Ministry of the Environment

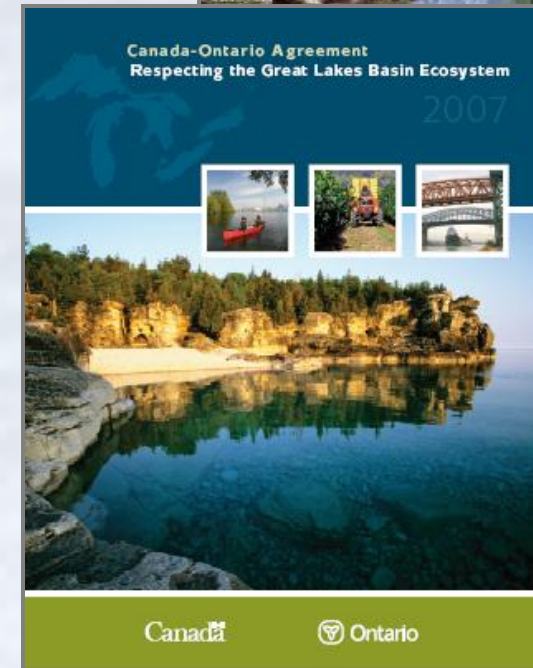
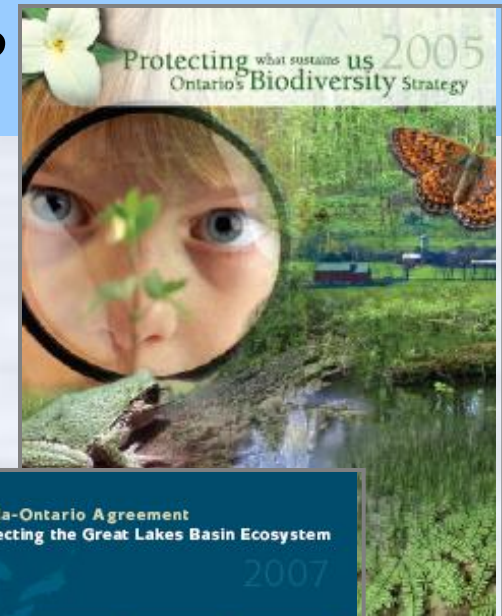
Protecting Water

- Protecting water from pressures from climate change, population growth, pollution and invasive species.
- Everything that happens on the land and in the air ultimately affects the water and the entire ecosystem.
- We use a watershed-based approach when making decisions to safeguard and protect the water.
- We believe that it is a shared responsibility to preserve, protect and sustain water for generations to come.



What Ontario is Doing to Protect Water?

- Protecting sources of drinking water through the *Clean Water Act, 2006*.
- Implementing Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy.
- Managing shared fisheries resources.
- Supporting stewardship action in the agriculture sector.
- Research and monitoring.
- Working with Aboriginal communities and partners.
- Implementing commitments under COA 2007.
- Protecting Great Lakes water quantity through the *Safeguarding and Sustaining Ontario's Water Act, 2007*.
- Promoting water conservation and innovative water technology through the proposed *Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act*.



Great Lakes Initiatives and Agreements

- Building on the feedback that we received as part of our engagement on the *Healthy Great Lakes, Strong Ontario*, we are using our Vision, Goals and Strategies as a basis for developing new initiatives, as well as Ontario's position on key Great Lakes agreements.
- Ontario is actively engaged in the process to amend the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement to ensure its interests and that of our partners are considered.
- Past First Nations input and reports (e.g. meetings hosted by the Chiefs of Ontario and the Union of Ontario Indians) have been valuable.
- We hope to engage Canada on a new Canada-Ontario Agreement and plan to actively engage you throughout the process.



Safeguarding and Sustaining Ontario's Water Resources for Future Generations

Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement, signed in 2005, committed the Great Lakes premiers and governors to pass laws to:

- **Ban transfers** out of the Basin (**inter-basin**) and from one Great Lake watershed to another (**intra-basin**), with strictly regulated exceptions;
- Manage water uses based on a common **decision-making standard**;
- Establish **water conservation programs** in each jurisdiction;
- Strengthen **information and science** to support sound decisions; and
- Enhance **regional oversight** and collaboration.

An intra-basin transfer means the transfer of water from one Great Lake to another.



- Proposal paper released last year sought input on regulating intra-basin transfers, elements of a water conservation strategy and next phase of water charges.
- Information gathered from the Proposal paper is being used to inform policy development on these initiatives.

Proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act

- Ontario has introduced the proposed *Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act*.
- Purpose:
 - a) To foster innovative water, wastewater and stormwater technologies and services in the private and public sectors;
 - b) To create opportunities for economic development and clean-technology jobs in Ontario; and
 - c) To conserve and sustain water resources for present and future generations.



Urban Stormwater Outfall



Rain Barrel

Key Elements of the Proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act

- The proposed *Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act* is largely enabling legislation.
- **Key elements:**
 - Allows the Minister of the Environment to set aspirational targets in relation to the conservation of water;
 - Creates a new Water Technology Acceleration Project that supports water-related technology and research, facilitating the creation and growth of globally competitive companies;
 - Enables the authority to require municipalities and other water service providers to prepare water sustainability plans and report on performance (phased-in approach);
 - Enables the authority to require standard information on municipal water bills;



(continued)

Key Elements of the Proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act

Key Elements (continued):

- Enables the authority to require water conservation plans in the public sector (municipalities, universities, schools, hospitals);
- Enables the requirement of new water efficiency standards for consumer products;
- Requires provincial reporting by the Minister on the proposed Act;
- Amends existing legislation (Ontario Water Resources Act, Capital Investment Plan Act, Green Energy Act, Building Code Act);
- Also proposing complementary initiatives to support objectives of the proposed Act (e.g., water labelling, professional training etc.)



Green Roof



Low Flow Shower

Next Steps

Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act

- The proposed *Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act* will be informed by public, stakeholder and Aboriginal input throughout the legislative process.
 - Please visit the Legislative Assembly of Ontario website for details at: <http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/home.do>.
- Ontario will continue to engage on the development of any new regulations, if the proposed Act passes.



Miigwetch, Thank you