



MISSISSIPPI-RIDEAU SOURCE PROTECTION COMMITTEE MEETING

**Thursday, May 6, 2010
7 pm
Carp Agricultural Hall (Fairgrounds), Carp**

DISPOSITION

Note: Underlining indicates a new or amended recommendation approved by Committee

1.0 a) Agenda Review

Motion 1-05/10

Moved by: Eleanor Renaud
Seconded by: George Braithwaite

That the Agenda be reordered to move Item 4.0 ahead of Item 2.0.

Carried

1.0 c) Adoption of the Agenda

Motion 2-05/10

That the Agenda be approved as amended.

Carried

1.0 e) Approval of Minutes

Motion 3-05/10

That the minutes of the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee meeting of April 1, 2010 be approved as amended.

Carried

1.0 f) Status of Action Items

Motion 4-05/10

That the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee receive the Status of Action Items report for information.

Carried

4.0 b) Tritium

Motion 5-05/10

Whereas, the primary focus of Ontario's *Clean Water Act* is to ensure communities are able to protect their municipal drinking water supplies now and in the future from overuse and contamination.

Whereas, the Act requires municipalities, conservation authorities, First Nations, agriculture, business and industry, environmental groups, health units, government agencies, and local residents to work together to identify threats to source water and develop policies to address them.

Whereas, under the auspices of the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee, the draft Surface Water Vulnerability Studies (December 2009) for the two Intake Protection Zones on the Ottawa River for the City of Ottawa illustrate the potential for contamination of tritium from the AECL's Chalk River Laboratories (CRL) on the municipal source water for the City of Ottawa (serving over 814,000 people) as well as other municipalities, downstream of the CRL.

Whereas, although the Chalk River Laboratories is situated approximately 190 kilometres northwest of Ottawa and deemed to be beyond the jurisdictional boundaries of the Mississippi-Rideau Source Water Protection Region, the Committee recognizes the importance of mitigating this potential for contamination given that there is no treatment technology available to remove tritium at drinking water treatment plants, and the only approach to lower tritium levels in drinking water is to avoid contamination of the source water.

Therefore be it resolved that the Government of Canada, the Federal Minister of Health, the Federal Minister of Natural Resources, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, AECL, and local area Members of Parliament be advised of the following:

1. The potential contamination of tritium from the AECL's Chalk River Laboratories and the impacts to municipal source water protection efforts for the City of Ottawa and other municipalities.

2. The potential impact of the Ontario Drinking Water Advisory Council's six recommendation to existing operational protocols at the AECL's Chalk River Laboratories given that there is no treatment technology available to remove tritium at drinking water treatment plants and the only approach to lower tritium levels in drinking water is to avoid contamination of the source water.

Be it further resolved that the respective regulatory/governing agencies of AECL's Chalk River Laboratories be requested:

1. To work with the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Region, and partners, as part of the source protection planning process to develop policies, protocols and best management practices to protect the municipal source water quality of the Ottawa River.
2. To produce monthly reports of weekly test results for tritium and running annual averages and that these reports be sent to regulatory bodies, including the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, municipalities and health units located downstream of CRL, local public interest groups, and to make these reports available to the general public via a website.
3. To monitor trends in the monthly data and if there is an indication of increases (even if they are below the Standard), the province and the responsible federal agency should require AECL's Chalk River Laboratories to take appropriate corrective actions, in collaboration with other appropriate authorities.
4. That monitoring and reporting at the point of discharge should be the focus for emergency response in that monitoring at drinking water treatment plants is not an appropriate approach for alerting authorities and the public of significant and / or elevated discharges of tritium. And, that the current program should be enhanced to require AECL's Chalk River Laboratories to report monthly to regulatory authorities and other public bodies on the levels of tritium discharges and immediately in each case where discharges exceed designated notification level(s).
5. To speak to the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee about their current regulatory/governing framework with regards to minimizing tritium releases as well as efforts underway to further align operational practices with the recommendations of the Ontario Drinking Water Advisory Council.

Be it further resolved that this motion be circulated to our neighbouring source protection region, Raisin-South Nation and other municipalities within the Ottawa watershed for further consideration and endorsement.

And, be it further resolved, that this motion be circulated to the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario for information.

Carried

Motion 6-05/10

Whereas, the primary focus of Ontario's *Clean Water Act* is to ensure communities are able to protect their municipal drinking water supplies now and in the future from overuse and contamination.

Whereas, the Act requires municipalities, conservation authorities, First Nations, agriculture, business and industry, environmental groups, health units, government agencies, and local residents to work together to identify threats to source water and develop policies to address them.

Whereas, under the auspices of the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee (the Committee), the draft Surface Water Vulnerability Studies (December 2009) for the two Intake Protection Zones on the Ottawa River for the City of Ottawa illustrate the potential for contamination of tritium from the AECL's Chalk River Laboratories (CRL) on the municipal source water for the City of Ottawa (serving over 814,000 people) as well as other municipalities, downstream of the CRL.

Whereas, the measured tritium levels in the City of Ottawa's drinking water are consistently well below the most stringent established health standards, including Ontario's health standards as well as other standards outside of Canada (see attached memos dated 5 March 2009 and 19 November 2009).

Whereas, even though the AECL's Chalk River Laboratories are outside of the jurisdictional boundaries of the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Region, the Committee is concerned with the potential for contamination, particularly given that there is no treatment technology available to remove tritium at drinking water treatment plants and the only approach to lower tritium levels in drinking water is to avoid contamination of the source water.

Whereas, on February 21, 2007, then Minister of the Environment Laurel Broten requested the Ontario Drinking Water Advisory Council (Advisory Council) to provide advice on the current Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard (ODWQS) for tritium as a result of the issue being raised by the Medical Officer of Health for the City of Toronto.

Whereas, in undertaking its review on tritium, the Advisory Council established a working group comprised of members with knowledge of the issue and experience in radionuclide risk and regulation to assist the Council as a whole.

And whereas, the Advisory Council made the following six recommendations in their *Report and Advice on the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard for Tritium* to the Minister of Environment on May 21, 2009:

1. The Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard for tritium should be revised to 20 Bq/L, recognizing that:
 - 20 Bq/L relates to health effects from long-term, chronic exposure over a life time of exposure of 70 years;
 - 20 Bq/L is within the range of variations considered by the Council (7 Bq/L to 109 Bq/L), for a 10^{-6} risk level; and
 - 20 Bq/L, based on a running annual average, is achievable in drinking water, without significant cost to the nuclear power industry, according to the Canadian Nuclear Association.
2. The Standard of 20 Bq/L should be applied as the running average of the preceding 52 weekly composite samples. This running annual average is consistent with the current weekly sampling and reporting programs, and should also be used to generate monthly averages and identify trends.
3. The current sampling and monitoring programs, as conducted by the Ministry of labour and the industry, are appropriate, and should continue. Sampling and reporting should only be required for those drinking water treatment plants that are in the proximity of or under the influence of sources of tritium. As well, the Ministry of the Environment should continue to monitor tritium at drinking water systems as part of the Drinking Water Surveillance Program (DWSP).
4. Monthly reports of weekly test results and running annual averages should be sent to regulatory bodies, local municipalities and health units, local public interest groups, and should also be made available to the general public.
5. To monitor trends in the monthly data and if there is an indication of increases (even if they are below the Standard), the province should require the discharger to take appropriate corrective actions, in collaboration with other appropriate authorities.
6. Monitoring and reporting at the point of discharge should be the focus for emergency response in that monitoring at drinking water treatment plants is not an appropriate approach for alerting authorities and the public of significant and / or elevated discharges of tritium. The current program should be enhanced to require the dischargers to report monthly to regulatory authorities and other public bodies on the levels of tritium discharges and immediately in each case where discharges exceed designated notification level(s).

Therefore be it resolved that the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee requests that the Minister of the Environment adopt the above-noted recommendations of the Ontario Drinking Water Advisory Council to strengthen the *Safe Drinking Water Act* as well as source water protection efforts currently underway across Ontario under the *Clean Water Act*.

Be it further resolved, that this motion be circulated to all Source Protection Committees across Ontario for further consideration and endorsement.

And, be it further resolved, that this motion be circulated to the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario for information.

Carried

2.0 Assessment Report Development

Motion 7-05-10

That the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee receive the following chapter as amended for inclusion in the *preliminary draft* Assessment Report:

- Chapter 6 – Surface Water Sources

Carried

5.0 Rural Clean Water Program

Motion 8-05/10

That the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee approve the attached letter of support for local Rural Clean Water Programs and send it to the Ministers of the Environment; Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; and Health and Long-term Care.

Carried

6.0 Community Outreach

Motion 9-05/10

That the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee receive the Community Outreach report for information.

Carried