

MISSISSIPPI-RIDEAU SOURCE PROTECTION REGION
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MINUTES

**Mississippi-Rideau
Source Protection Committee**

May 6, 2010

#5/10

Present: Scott Berquist George Braithwaite
Scott Bryce Carol Dillon
Richard Fraser Paul Knowles
Drew Lampman Patricia Larkin
Randy Malcolm Peter McLaren
Beverly Millar Eleanor Renaud
Janet Stavinga (Chair)

Jean-Guy Albert (Medical Officer of Health Liaison)
Phil Sweetnam (Source Protection Authority Liaison)
Mary Wooding (Ministry of the Environment Liaison)

Regrets: Christine Leadman

Staff: Sommer Casgrain-Robertson Jackie Oblack
Michelle Paton Brian Stratton

Guests: Dillon Consulting (Luc Begin, Benoit Chouinard, Brent Loney)

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

Chair Stavinga welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked members to introduce themselves.

a) Agenda Review

Chair Stavinga requested a motion to reorder the Agenda moving Item 4.0 ahead of Item 2.0.

Motion 1-05/10

Moved by: Eleanor Renaud
Seconded by: George Braithwaite

Carried

b) **Notice of Proxies** **None**

c) **Adoption of the Agenda**

Motion 2-05/10

That the Agenda be approved as amended.

Carried

d) **Declarations of Interest** **None**

e) **Approval of Minutes**

A typographical error was identified on Page 6.

Motion 3-05/10

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

Carried

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

g) **Correspondence**

Chair Stavinga noted that correspondence from the Cataraqui Source Protection Area, indicating that they had posted their draft Assessment Report for public consultation, was included.

4.0 Tritium

a) **MOE overview of Ontario's Drinking Water Quality Standards Process**

Mary Wooding gave members an overview of Ontario's Drinking Water Standards process. Ms. Wooding offered to provide a link to the Ministry's website dealing with the Standards and associated health impacts. She will also advise members of the mechanism by which the general public can request a review of a standard.

In May 2009, the Ontario Drinking Water Advisory Council submitted a recommendation that the standard for tritium be lowered to 20 Bq/L. Ms. Wooding confirmed that this recommendation is currently under Ministerial review.

b) Draft Motions regarding the Current Ontario Drinking Water Standard for Tritium and the Chalk River Laboratories

Chair Stavinga provided background information on the drafting of the two recommendations. She confirmed that the recommendations have been vetted through the City of Ottawa. Copies of the recommendations have also been provided to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission for information. Both motions are intended to be circulated to other source protection committees for their consideration.

A member suggested that the Ontario Drinking Water Advisory Council's six recommendations to existing operational protocols be included as an attachment to the transmittal letter.

Following a discussion, the Committee agreed that both recommendations be amended to allow for circulation to the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

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

Sommer Casgrain-Robertson provided members with a summary of progress to date:

- The *preliminary Draft* Assessment Report will be presented in its entirety to the Committee at their June meeting including Chapters 8 and 9 (Data Gaps and Summary of Key Findings).
- Chapter 6 is the last major chapter to be presented to the Committee
- The draft surface water studies were presented at five open houses – Britannia, Lemieux, Carleton Place, Perth, and Smiths Falls in March and April.

Brian Stratton introduced Benoit Chouinard, of Dillon Consulting, who presented the surface water threats findings (slide presentation attached). Mr. Stratton reminded members that due to changes made to the IPZ-3 vulnerability scoring in April, the threats results shown in the Agenda package and presented tonight are for IPZ-1 and IPZ-2 only. Additional work is being done to enumerate threats in IPZ-3 zones where applicable and this data will be included in the *preliminary draft* Assessment Report in June.

Chair Stavinga emphasized the need for clarity and transparency in the Assessment Report.

Sommer Casgrain-Robertson confirmed that letters identifying potential significant threats will be distributed to landowners once the threats work has been completed and a consultation schedule for the Assessment Report has been established. Each letter will be specific to each property indicating what potential threats were flagged. Committee members and municipalities will be provided with sample versions of the letters prior to distribution. Sommer Casgrain-Robertson emphasized that the letters are a mechanism to increase landowner awareness and provide potentially affected property owners an opportunity to review and comment on the draft Assessment Report. The letters are a communications tool to forewarn potentially affected landowners about the process underway prior to the implementation of plan policies in 2013. The language used in the letters must be clear, informative, and invite active

participation.

Sommer Casgrain-Robertson provided an update on the public consultation process. She provided a preliminary summary of public comments received on the draft surface water studies. Comments confirmed the need for MOE to prescribe how surface water studies should be done, including a methodology for determining vulnerability scores. A *preliminary draft* summary of public comments received on both the draft groundwater and surface studies will be presented to the Committee at their June meeting for review and approval.

A member recommended creating a “Frequently Asked Question” section on the website based on the summary of public comments and responses provided by staff.

a) Preliminary Draft Assessment Report Chapter

A Member questioned the IPZ-2 vulnerability scoring uncertainty levels for Britannia on page 6-57 and for Lemieux Island on page 6-65. They suggested that the IPZ-2 scores for Ottawa should be assigned a high level of uncertainty because the data only covered information from Ontario. Brian Stratton explained that under the Technical Rules our IPZ-2 can only encompass area in Ontario. Preliminary IPZ-2 delineation in Quebec was done as additional work to provide as complete a picture as possible for the public. Mr. Stratton suggested the insertion of a third bullet noting the lack of data on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River.

The Member and Mr. Stratton also suggested adding a note to pages 6-58 (Britannia) and 6-66 (Lemieux Island) indicating that the threat assessment does not include the Province of Quebec.

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

Sommer Casgrain-Robertson advised that the rescoring of IPZ-3, and clarification from the Ministry that fuel tanks stored in basements are considered “below grade”, will result in a major increase in the number of potentially significant threat notices that will have to be mailed. This will not affect completing a *preliminary draft* Assessment Report for the Committee’s consideration at their June meeting but it may delay the public consultation process that follows. Staff will meet next week to revisit current timelines, projected increase in workload, and to determine if a second extension will be necessary. Committee Members will be updated as soon as possible.

3.0 Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program

Chair Stavinga noted the report on the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program was included for information purposes. Members had no questions.

5.0 Rural Clean Water Program

Chair Stavinga spoke to the attached letter of support for the Rural Clean Water Programs and confirmed that the purpose of the letter was to raise awareness of the Program and not to solicit provincial funding at this time.

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 Ontario Ministers of the Environment; Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; and Health and Long-Term Care.

Carried

6.0 Community Outreach

2. *MOE Chairs Conference Call*

Chair Stavinga advised that she would defer her report on the MOE Chairs' meeting until June.

4. *Quebec-Ontario Ottawa River Meeting*

Chair Stavinga thanked Mary Wooding for organizing and facilitating this meeting.

10. *Huntley Centennial School "Coffee House"*

Patricia Larkin stated that Phil Sweetnam and Beverly Millar also attended this event.

11. *Ontario Water Works Association/Ontario Municipal Water Association Joint Annual Conference & Trade Show*

Scott Bryce and Chair Stavinga attended this conference in Windsor. The level of interest in source protection has been steadily increasing each year.

Patricia Larkin will email Sommer Casgrain-Robertson, for distribution to all Members, the details regarding Wastewater Systems Effluent Regulations recently posted on the Canada Gazette.

Patricia Larkin attended a Water Guardian's network meeting.

Patricia Larkin and Chair Stavinga will forward information links on the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission to Sommer-Casgrain-Robertson for distribution to members.

Sommer Casgrain-Robertson gave an interview for CBC Radio on April 30 on climate change and source water.

7.0 Other Business None

8.0 Member Inquiries None

9.0 Next Meeting

Date: June 3, 2010

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: Smiths Falls (443 Rideau Wing (RCAF)), 44 Abbott Street North
5pm – public “meet and greet”

10.0 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 pm.

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Janet Stavinga
Chair

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Michelle Paton
Recording Secretary