

Report To: Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Committee
Report No.: SPC-23-06-01
From: Martin Keller, Senior Manager, Watershed Planning and Source Protection
Date: June 13, 2023
Subject: Source Protection Program Updates

Recommendation

THAT the Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Committee receives for information report SPC-23-06-01 Source Protection Program Updates.

Executive Summary

This program update report includes updates on changes at the Conservation and Source Protection Branch, specifically in relation to Liaison Officers and their representation at Source Protection Committee (SPC) meetings, the appointment of City of Hamilton Councillor Ted McMeekin to the Halton Hamilton Source Protection Committee, progress on addressing the 2021 Director's Technical Rules changes with respect to drinking water threat activities including road salt, snow, fuel, and dense non-aqueous phase liquids (DNAPLs), funding proposal for undertaking the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Tool, and progress on promoting Provincial Best Practices for protecting drinking water systems not covered under the Clean Water Act.

Report

Conservation and Source Protection Branch, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Beth Forrest, Liaison Officer, has moved to a new position and is now a Senior Drinking Water Program Advisor within the branch. Staff would like to thank her and congratulate Beth in her new role. At this point, the Ministry is not filling the liaison officer position(s). Besides staffing changes at the branch, the Ministry has upward of thirty proposed plan amendments in the queue for review and approval. At this time, the Ministry is focusing on ensuring plan amendments are reviewed and submitted to the Ministry's office for approval. For the foreseeable future, Ministry staff will not be able to join SPC meetings. Any Ministry updates staff receive can be shared in SPC reports or through separate communications if needed. Any questions to Ministry staff and/or requests for support are now submitted to source.protection@ontario.ca. At this point, staff do not foresee a significant impact on source protection program implementation in the Halton Hamilton Source Protection Region as a result of these changes.

Source Protection Committee member appointments

On April 20, 2023, the Halton Region Source Protection Authority appointed Ted McMeekin, City of Hamilton Councillor for Ward 15 Flamborough Waterdown as the municipal representative representing the City of Hamilton, Niagara Region, and Town of Grimsby on the Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Committee (SPC). The term of the appointment is four years, expiring January 2027, in line with the municipal council election cycle.

2021 Technical Rules

Staff have met with the Halton Hamilton Municipal Working group on April 5 and June 2, 2023 to discuss options and proposed changes to the policy approaches for application, handling and storage of road salt, and storage of snow, given the changes in the 2021 Technical Rules. These discussions are ongoing and report SPC 23-06-02 provides details and context of the proposed direction for any changes to the policy approaches.

Staff have compiled an overview of the existing policy approaches, changes to the circumstances given the 2021 Technical Rules, and options for proposed policy changes for the handling and storage of fuel and dense non-aqueous phase liquid (DNAPL) for presentation and discussion at the June 2, 2023 Halton Hamilton Municipal Working Group meeting. Staff will continue to discuss any proposed policy approaches with municipal staff and will provide an update to the SPC at a future meeting.

Further work on other drinking water threat activities will be undertaken as per the priorities listed and presented to the SPC at the December 8, 2022 meeting and updates on these reviews will be brought forward and presented to the SPC at future meetings as well.

Technical work undertaken by the Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) allows the delineation of the Intake Protection Zone (IPZ-2) for the Woodward drinking water intake to be updated. Hydraulic modeling by HCA will provide 2-year storm flow velocities, necessary for modeling the extent of the IPZ-2 delineation, for all creeks that flow into the Lake Ontario portion of the Woodward IPZ-2. At this time, HCA provided the flow velocities for Stoney and Battlefield Creeks to Conservation Halton. The hydraulic modelling for the smaller creeks is in the final stages and staff expect to be receiving the results of the technical study soon. Once all data are available staff will establish the instream extents of IPZ-2 based on technical rule requirements (2-hour time of travel) and update the IPZ-2 delineation and vulnerability assessment. Results of the technical work will be presented to the SPC at a future SPC meeting.

Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Tool

In response to a request for funding proposals by the Conservation and Source Protection Branch in early April, 2023, staff submitted a proposal to undertake Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments (CCVA) for the drinking water systems in the Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Region (HHSPR), using the Conservation Ontario tool, developed in 2020. If funded, the assessments would include the six groundwater sources and four Lake Ontario based municipal drinking water supply systems, as well as the City of Hamilton's drinking water system in Lynden, located in the Grand River Source Protection Area. Staff from the City of Hamilton, Lake Erie Region, and Halton Region staff support this proposal.

The aim of the assessment is to determine the level of vulnerability of drinking water systems to climate change impacts on source water quality. The assessment will follow the Technical Rules requirements and the results can be used for further, more detailed assessments and action plans by municipalities to address the vulnerabilities and increase adaptive capacity and resilience. Assessment results will also be included in a future Assessment Report update, as per the 2021 Technical Rule 15.3.

The Halton-Hamilton source protection team is proposing to undertake the assessment in house, over the next several months until March 2024. Currently, staff are waiting to hear back from Ministry staff.

Provincial Best Practices Guide for protecting drinking water systems outside the Clean Water Act

Staff met with Richard MacDonald, Manager Food and Water Safety, Hamilton Public Health on April 4, 2023. Hamilton Public Health is preparing a mail out campaign later this year to more than 2400 private well owners who have submitted well samples to the City between 2020 and 2022, an initiative that is undertaken every five years. Halton Hamilton Source Protection Region has been offered to include source protection related material in the mail out, and staff are working to develop tailored best practices material, e.g., a fact sheet or brochure, to be provided to the City of Hamilton for the mail out campaign.

Staff met with Nicole Mathews, Manager, Environmental Health and Julia Bazylevych, Supervisor for the Safe Water Program, Halton Region Public Health on May 12, 2023. Halton Hamilton Source Protection Region has an opportunity to reach out to residents in Halton Region by linking to the Halton Region Public Health website. An option is to develop a Best Practices webpage on protectingwater.ca and link that page to the Halton Region Public Health website. Work will be commencing on this initiative in the coming weeks.

Annual Reporting 2022

Following the March 9, 2023 SPC meeting, the final Annual Progress Report for 2022 was presented to the Halton Region Source Protection Authority on April 20, 2023 and to the Hamilton Region Source Protection Authority on May 4, 2023. The 2022 annual reporting data was submitted by May 1, 2023 through the Electronic Annual Reporting (EAR) portal. Final submission of the 2022 Annual Progress Report and Supplementary Form was sent to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks following the Hamilton Region Source Protection Authority meeting on May 5, 2023.

Signed & respectfully submitted:



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