

Item 8.1

Section I – Items for the Toronto and Region Source Protection Authority Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Toronto and Region Source Protection Authority
Action
Friday, April 22, 2022 Meeting

FROM: Laurie Nelson, Director, Policy Planning

RE: **ANNUAL REPORT (2021) – DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION PROGRAM**

KEY ISSUE

Endorse Credit Valley Source Protection Authority, as the Lead Source Protection Authority, to report to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks that implementation progress of the Credit Valley – Toronto and Region – Central Lake Ontario (CTC) Source Protection Plan was progressing well, but short of target, between January 1 and December 31, 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report entitled Annual Report (2021) – Drinking Water Source Protection Program be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the Toronto and Region Source Protection Authority (TRSPA) endorse the recommendation of the Credit Valley-Toronto and Region-Central Lake Ontario (CTC) Source Protection Committee to report to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) that the implementation progress of the CTC Source Protection Plan is progressing well, but short of target.

BACKGROUND

The Credit Valley – Toronto and Region – Central Lake Ontario (CTC) Source Protection Plan (the Plan) came into effect December 31, 2015, providing a framework of policies to protect the quality and quantity of the source waters for municipal drinking water systems located in the CTC Source Protection Region. The objectives of the Plan are:

1. To protect existing and future drinking water sources in the CTC Source Protection Region; and
2. To ensure that existing activities cease to be, or do not become, significant drinking water threats, and that new activities never become significant drinking water threats.

Source Protection Authorities (SPAs) are required to submit annual reports on Plan implementation progress to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) under section 46 of the *Clean Water Act 2006* (CWA). The report on 2021 implementation progress will be the fifth such report since the Plan came into effect.

Annual progress reports are prepared using data provided by municipalities and provincial ministries as required by the monitoring policies in the Plan and in accordance with section 81 of the CWA and section 65 of Ontario Regulation 287/07. Reports from implementing bodies are submitted to the SPA annually by February 1st and reflect implementation efforts from the previous calendar year, January 1 to December 31, 2021.

Staff assess implementation and populate two reporting templates provided by the Ministry: 1) a public-facing annual progress report and 2) a more detailed supplemental form submitted only to the Ministry.

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The annual report is presented this to the CTC Source Protection Committee (Committee) for its review. The Committee is required to comment on the extent to which, in its opinion, the objectives set out in the Plan are being achieved. Comments received from the Committee (Attachment 1) are being presented to the Credit Valley, Central Lake Ontario, and Toronto and Region Source Protection Authorities for endorsement in April 2022, prior to submission of the annual progress report to the province by May 1st.

RATIONALE

The CTC Source Protection Committee reviewed a draft of the annual report at Meeting #2/22 held on March 22, 2022. Following discussion, the Committee concluded that Plan implementation is progressing well, but short of target.

Almost all (96%) of the Plan's legally binding policies to address significant drinking water threats have been implemented, and all municipalities have established processes to ensure that land use planning decisions conform to the Plan. Of the more than 10,000 significant drinking water threats identified in the CTC Region when the Plan came into effect in 2015, 325 (about 5%) remain to be addressed, (only 3 within TRCA's jurisdiction). For these reasons, the Committee determined that implementation of the Plan is progressing well overall.

However, the Committee expressed concern that fewer than half of the required risk management plans (RMPs) have been established to address significant threats. While 150 RMPs are in place within the CTC Region, an estimated 205 RMPs remain to be negotiated, (only 3 within TRCA's jurisdiction). Most of the outstanding RMPs are required to be in place by the end of 2023.

As building relationships and negotiating RMPs with business and property owners is a time-consuming process, it is unlikely that all municipalities in the CTC Region will meet the 2023 implementation deadline. For the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has constrained the ability of municipalities to engage property and business owners and conduct site visits.

The Committee will continue to work with source protection authority and municipal staff to review source protection plan policies requiring RMPs and seek ways to advance risk management plan completion.

The Committee also noted that some municipal septic system inspection programs were delayed in 2020 and 2021 because of the pandemic. Two hundred and thirty-one inspections (or 77% of the total required) remain to be completed by the end of 2022, the final year of the five-year inspection cycle. About 80 of the remaining inspections will be within the TRCA jurisdiction.

Finally, water quality analysis suggests increasing sodium and chloride concentrations in the raw water from most of the municipal wells with identified issues in the drinking water systems for Orangeville and Georgetown.

For these reasons, the Committee concluded that progress in achieving the plan's objectives falls short of target. This assessment of implementation progress is consistent with annual reports from 2020 and 2019.

Relationship to Building the Living City, the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan

This report supports the following strategies set forth in the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan:

Strategy 2 – Manage our regional water resources for current and future generations

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FINANCIAL DETAILS

Funding has been provided to Toronto and Region Conservation Authority through Credit Valley Conservation (as the lead Source Protection Authority in the CTC Source Protection Region) through a transfer payment agreement with the MECP for the April 1 2021 to March 31 2022 provincial fiscal year. Negotiations are now underway with the MECP for a two-year funding agreement to March 31, 2024. The financial resources to support TRCA staff time to advance and maintain the Drinking Water Source Protection Program are provided through these agreements through account 121-91

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

Following endorsement of the annual progress report by the Credit Valley, Toronto and Region, and Central Lake Ontario Source Protection Authorities, CTC SPR staff will submit the annual progress reporting results to the MECP by May 1, 2022. Additionally, staff will post the annual progress report (Attachment 2) on the CTC website (www.ctcswp.ca).

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Date: April 11, 2022

Attachments: 2

Attachment 1: Correspondence from Doug Wright, Chair, CTC SPC

Attachment 2: CTC Source Protection 2021 Annual Progress Report