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Information Notice:

Title:

Review of Ontario's Hauled Sewage Policy and Program

EBR Registry Number: 012-9498

Ministry:

Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change

Date Information Notice loaded to the Registry:

February 10, 2017

Keyword(s): Water | Waste | Sewage

This notice is for your information. The Environmental Bill of Rights does not require this notice to be placed on the Environmental Registry, however, section 6 of the Act does allow the Environmental Registry to be used to share information about the environment with the public.

Rationale for Exemption to Public Comment:

This Information Notice has been posted for the purposes of pre-consultation. The ministry is not proposing any policy change at this time.

Comments may also be sent by e-mail to Land.Water@ontario.ca

Description:

The Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) is seeking comments from the public, stakeholders and partners on its review of the hauled sewage policy and program. These comments will be used to inform the development of a Policy Proposal at a later date.

Hauled Sewage, commonly known as septage, is the waste material removed from portable toilets, sewage holding tanks and septic systems. MOECC currently regulates the transportation and land application/disposal of untreated hauled sewage through Environmental Compliance Approvals issued under the Environmental Protection Act (EPA), and through Ontario's General Waste Management Regulation (R.R. O. 1990, Reg. 347) under the EPA.

Currently, if the hauled sewage is treated to an appropriate level, its application to agricultural land for crop benefit may fall under the Nutrient Management Act and be exempt from the approval requirements for land application/disposal under the EPA.

In 2002, as a result of growing public concerns about the potential impact of the land application of untreated hauled sewage on the quality of groundwater and surface waters, Ontario proposed for public consultation a five-year strategy to ban this practice across the province. The proposed strategy was not implemented, as public and stakeholders comments coupled with further analysis indicated limited potential for sufficient hauled sewage treatment capacity across Ontario at that time.

As part of the hauled sewage policy and program review initiated in early 2016, MOECC is examining options for addressing environmental impacts and human health concerns associated with hauled sewage management, including its treatment, disposal and beneficial use.

This review is also identified as one of many proposed actions in the draft Canada-Ontario Action Plan for Lake Erie which is aimed at reducing nutrient loads to meet binational targets applicable to the Ontario portion of Lake Erie. The draft plan is expected to be released soon for public comment through a separate EBR Policy Proposal Notice.

Policy and Program Review Approach: :

Contact:

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Additional Information:

The following government offices have additional information regarding this Notice. To arrange a viewing of these documents please call the Ministry Contact or the Office listed below.

Land and Water Policy Branch
40 St. Clair Avenue West
Floor 10
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The ministry is currently considering a range of policy approaches regarding hauled sewage in Ontario, including a province-wide approach to deal with the land application of untreated hauled sewage, and geographically based restrictions, where there may be demonstrated hauled sewage treatment capacity at local municipal sewage treatment plants or other facilities capable of treating hauled sewage. These considerations are still preliminary and no decisions have been made.

The ministry is committed to ensuring that transparency, public consultation and engagement are central to this review. In addition to continuing to engage key stakeholders, such as municipalities, septic haulers, associations, land owners and community groups, as well as First Nations and Métis, the ministry is establishing a multi-sectoral working group to support the policy and program review. All Ontarians will also have an opportunity to provide comments on the policy and program review being undertaken through the Environmental Registry.

The ministry is committed to making informed evidence based decisions. We are in the process of collecting data and information about how hauled sewage is currently managed within the province through engagement sessions and sector specific surveys. This work will help the ministry estimate:

- annual volumes of hauled sewage generated across Ontario;
- volumes of hauled sewage treated and disposed of without treatment;
- current local hauled sewage treatment capacities across Ontario; and
- potential cost to develop adequate local capacities to treat hauled sewage.

The ministry is also in the process of evaluating the best available science regarding environmental impacts and treatment technologies, and reviewing how other jurisdictions regulate and manage hauled sewage. This data gathering step will support the ministry's efforts in developing new rules and guidance for treatment and land application of hauled sewage, based on the policy approach that is taken.

Purpose of Review: :

As part of the hauled sewage policy and program review, MOECC is examining options for addressing environmental impacts and human health concerns associated with hauled sewage management, including its treatment, disposal and beneficial uses (e.g., nutrients, renewable natural gas).

Through this posting, MOECC is seeking public input on its approach to the review that is currently underway. This input will inform the development of options. Once the analysis is complete, MOECC will develop an updated policy and program framework for consultation.

The questions below are intended to help guide this input:

- What should be done with hauled sewage, treated or untreated?
- What objective should any septage policy achieve?
- Are there any potential beneficial uses of hauled sewage that you would like the ministry to consider as part of this review?
- Are there any specific hauled sewage treatment technologies that you would like the ministry to consider as part of this review?
- What specific additional information would you like the ministry to consider as part of this review?

Other Information:

MOECC has posted on the Registry an Information Notice (EBR Registry Number [012-9214](#)), which provides to the public a list of the hauled sewage disposal sites that have a current Environmental Compliance Approval issued by an MOECC District Office. The list includes the contact information for the issuing District Office to enable members of the public to contact the appropriate office to obtain a copy of approvals that they may be interested in.

Additionally, MOECC has been posting proposal notices for new or renewed hauled sewage site applications on the Environmental Registry for public comment. All decisions will be posted on the Environmental Registry.

Other Public Consultation Opportunities:

This Information Notice will be posted for a 90 day comment period. The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change welcomes your comments on the approach to the policy and program review identified in this Information Notice. If you have any questions, or would like to submit your comments, please do so by May 10, 2017 contacting the individual listed under "Contact". Additionally, you may submit your comments on line through this Information Notice.

In an effort to ensure all interests are adequately considered as part of this review process, the MOECC will establish a multi-sectoral working group to provide advice throughout the review process.

Further, a series of informal multi-sectoral engagement sessions may be held as needed.

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