

OCC Responds to Safe Drinking Water Act Regulations

On July 15, 2004, in collaboration with OCC members, the Chamber responded to the government's recently issued Regulation 170/03 under the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2003. The OCC sent its submission to The Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of the Environment, in addition to the Premier, the Minister of Tourism and Recreation, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Minister of Health and Long Term Care, and the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

The submission outlines concerns with the regulations and provides recommendations to the Ministry to ensure that Ontario maintains safe drinking water without hindering business.

The current regulations stipulate that businesses must conduct a variety of testing and infrastructure instalments which are economically onerous to many small non-municipal businesses. Many smaller businesses affected by these regulations believe they will be unable to stay in business due to higher compliance costs and business outlays, and the effects this will have on their profit margin.

Some of the issues outlined in the submission include the effect the regulations will have on Ontario's tourism industry and the overall economy, higher compliance costs, the incompatibility of chlorination with septic systems as well as the negative health effects, and the scarcity and location of testing facilities.

The OCC recommends that the Ontario government implement an outcomes based approach where self testing and reporting can be monitored through random audits. Secondly, private health labs should continue testing at low or nominal costs, rather than transferring the responsibility onto costly private labs. The Ministry should also explore developing a pre-approved design templates with which drinking water system operators comply, rather than requiring an engineering report. Lastly, the OCC recommends that the Ministry be more open to the use of UV filtration systems as an alternative to chlorination.

To view the complete submission please visit the OCC website at www.occ.on.ca. For more information on the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2003 please visit the Ministry of Environment website at <http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/water/sdwa/legislation.htm>.

Mark Your Calendars for Governing Council 2004

The OCC is currently developing the agenda for the next meeting of the Governing Council, which will take place **Friday, November 19, 2004**, from 9:00am to 3:00pm, in Toronto. The meeting will include remarks from the OCC Chair, Treasurer and President, in addition to a noteworthy keynote guest speaker.

There may be a period of time on the agenda to debate any new policy resolutions submitted by the membership, should members wish to submit a policy the deadline is **Wednesday, September 8, 2004 by 5:00pm**. Remember, resolutions must be provincial in scope, one that does not align one industry against another, and on the legislative agenda for the provincial governing, or is of considerable

concern to a majority of OCC members. Resolutions will not be considered unless they meet the stated criteria. Areas of focus include, finance, taxation, transportation, infrastructure, border crossings, trade, health care, education and training, and energy issues.

The format of a resolution consists of four main parts, and they are: (1) Title - which reflects the nature of the resolution; (2) Issue - a brief summary of the resolution; (3) Background - a detailed outline of the issue and an assessment of available policy options; and (4) Recommendations - which list the preferred policy options for the provincial government to follow.

Once resolutions are collected they will be posted on the OCC website. The resolutions will each be evaluated by the appropriate OCC policy committee or task force, and we encourage all chambers and boards to diligently review each resolution once posted.

If you have any questions regarding policy resolutions please contact [Stuart Johnston](#).

OBAA Call for Nominations

Watch your email inbox next week for information regarding the revised categories and deadlines for nominations. Tickets for the November 10, 2004, Outstanding Business Achievement Awards (OBAA) Gala are already on sale. For details, please visit www.occ.on.ca/2obaa.asp.

Government Releases Comprehensive Plan to Manage Growth in the Golden Horseshoe

On July 12, 2004, the Honourable David Caplan, MPP, Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, released a discussion paper on Ontario's plan for growth and development in the Golden Horseshoe region. The paper, entitled *Places to Grow: Better Choices. Brighter Future*, outlines a framework for managing economic and population growth in the province. The news release, related background, and discussion paper, can be downloaded from the Ministry's website at www.pir.gov.on.ca.

The focus of the document is on the Greater Golden Horseshoe region which includes the cities of Toronto, Hamilton and Kawartha Lakes; the regional municipalities of Halton, Peel, York, Durham, Waterloo, and Niagara; and the counties of Haldimand, Brant, Wellington, Dufferin, Simcoe, Northumberland and Peterborough. Forecasts reveal that if development patterns continue at their current rate, there will be intense pressure on the region's resources and its infrastructure. The projected increase in population of the Horseshoe is almost equivalent to the combined combinations of the cities of Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton.

The paper addresses a number of key planning issues including urban sprawl, traffic congestion, land use, economic development and investment in public infrastructure such as roads, public transit, schools, healthcare and water and sewer systems. The document was developed in consultation with a wide range of industry stakeholders, including the OCC, as well as the government, the private sector, and other environmental and business development associations. The key goal of the growth plan is to create the right conditions for greater economic growth, investment, job creation and economic competitiveness in the Golden Horseshoe regions – in line with the OCC's overarching goal of making the province of Ontario one of the most competitive jurisdictions in North America.

The Ontario government is seeking public input and response to the discussion paper in preparation for its final draft. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce is currently reviewing the paper in relation to existing OCC policy positions, including those on the Mid-Peninsula Transportation Corridor, trade

corridors, establishing a transportation authority and the expansion of Highway 407, to name a few. The OCC plans to respond to the Ministry before the September 24 deadline by incorporating members input. Not only will we be discussing this issue at the committee level, but we will be soliciting your valuable feedback and input in the form of a survey, to be launched shortly. In the interim, if you have any comments on the proposed plan, please send your them to Bridget Hauserman at bridgethauserman@occ.on.ca.

Roger Martin's Task Force Releases Fifth Working Paper

On July 9, 2004, the Institute for Competitiveness & Prosperity released their fifth working paper entitled *Strengthening Structures: Upgrading Specialized Support and Competitive Pressure*, which can be found on its website at www.competeprosper.ca.

The institute is a not-for-profit organization, supported by the Ministry of Economic, Development and Trade, which serves as the research arm of Ontario's Task Force on Competitiveness, Productivity and Economic Growth. The chair of the Task Force is Roger Martin, Dean of the Joseph Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto. Its mandate is to measure and monitor Ontario's competitiveness, productivity and economic progress compared to other provinces and US states, and to report to the public on a regular basis.

The working papers are published by the Institute to raise public awareness and stimulate the debate on a range of issues related to competitiveness and prosperity. Over the past two years the Institute has been exploring why prosperity in Ontario is lower than competing and neighbouring jurisdictions. Most recent available results indicate we trail the peer median GDP per capita by \$4,118 or by 10 percent of their level. The gap refers to how much Ontario's Gross Domestic Product per person trails the median performance of a peer group comprising the largest US states and Quebec. Productivity is the key factor behind this prosperity gap and the Institute recommends that Ontarians need to strengthen its capacity for innovation in order to raise its productivity.

The latest report has revealed that Ontarians' wages trail neighbouring jurisdictions by 23 per cent in most competitive industries. In its report, the Institute has evaluated the impact of market structures on Ontario's competitiveness to help understand the causes of its prosperity gap versus a peer group of US states. The report also shows findings that this wage gap is highest in the clusters where wage levels are highest. In higher wage clusters such as financial services and information technology, Ontario's wages lag considerably – trailing peer states by 37 per cent and 54 per cent respectively. On a positive note, Ontario's wages outperformed peer states by 20 per cent in its natural resource industries and in retailing and personal services. The Institute will continue to research the causes of and possible remedies for the prosperity gap. The Task Force will publish results in its Third Annual Report in the fall.

OCC Calls For Input on Planning Issues

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced on June 1 that it is taking the next steps towards proposed reforms to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) and the land-use planning system. The government has proposed reforms to the Planning Act through Bill 26, the proposed Strong Communities (Planning Amendment) Act, 2004. The Ministry has produced three discussion papers addressing issues related to the planning reform initiatives and is requesting that stakeholders provide their input no later than August 31.

In preparing a response to this issue, the OCC kindly requests that member chamber's policy committees review the discussion papers and provide their responses to the OCC as soon as possible. The discussion papers can be found at http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/userfiles/HTML/nts_1_17395_1.html.

If your chamber or board has reviewed the discussion paper we strongly encourage you to send your comments to Bridget Hauserman, bridgethauserman@occ.on.ca, as soon as possible.

Proxies Needed for Convention

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce's (CCC) annual convention is quickly approaching. This year's event is in Calgary, Alberta, from September 18-20, 2004.

To ensure an adequate Ontario representation at the caucus meeting we encourage all those Ontario chambers and boards who are members of the CCC, but are unable to attend the convention, to tender their proxy to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. If you have not received the proxy form sent in the email, please email Rachel Kagan. For those that have received their form, **please** send the completed form to Rachel via fax at (416) 482-5879.

Thank you to all those chambers and boards who have already taken the time to fax back their completed forms.

Upcoming Events

Listed below are some upcoming events that may be of interest:

- OCC Borders and Trade Development Committee Meeting, July 21
- Civic Holiday – OCC Offices Closed, August 2
- OCC Education Committee Meeting, August 5
- OCC Board of Directors Meeting, August 6
- OCC Health Policy Committee Meeting, August 10
- OCC Energy Task Force Meeting, August 11
- Ontario Economic Summit (OES), Niagara-on-the-Lake, October 6-7
- Outstanding Business Achievement Awards (OBAA) Gala Dinner, November 10