

Septage Management Advisory Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCE

February 2004

PURPOSE

Provide advice and recommendations to Alberta Environment on septage management practices and legislative requirements.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

See attachment 1 for the list of stakeholders and their interest in septage management. Representatives from the listed stakeholders will be invited to participate as members of the advisory committee.

COMMITTEE TASKS

1. Review current practices and Alberta regulations related to the management of septage from residential dwellings and commercial facilities that are not served by sanitary sewer collection systems. This includes lake cottages, rural residential, roadside commercial facilities, campgrounds and pit toilets. Also include private systems/farms where they apply domestic wastewater to their own land.
2. Review Alberta Environment's standards and requirements related to land application of septage;
3. Review other jurisdictions' standards and requirements related to land application of septage;
4. Prepare a supporting document presenting
 - a. The findings outlined in items 1-3;
 - b. Environmental and health concerns, and advantages and disadvantages of management options for the management of septage;
5. Prepare a supporting document outlining regulatory options for the management of septage;
6. Prepare a recommendation report that:
 - a. Proposes acceptable methods for the disposal of septage including management standards, to address environmental and health concerns;
 - b. Proposes a regulatory strategy for the disposal of septage that is effective and streamlined. This must include an implementation plan.

OUTCOME

A recommendation report by the stakeholder advisory committee that includes:

- Best management practices for the septage from residential dwellings and commercial facilities; and
- Effective regulatory strategies for the disposal of septage, including an implementation plan.

TIME LINE

It is proposed that the initial committee meeting be held in February 2004 and the committee's final recommendation report be completed by end of July 2004. The committee will have to confirm their commitment to the proposed timelines.

ROLE OF CHAIR

The Chair, from Alberta Environment's Science and Standards Branch, will:

- Clarify Alberta Environment's expectations to the Committee,
- Prepare agendas and run the meetings,
- Ensure the Committee has adequate support to effectively review current information and practices, and make informed proposals to Alberta Environment,
- Help to ensure the Committee remains on topic with their discussions and advise on how to proceed, should a discussion become "stalled,"
- Manage the project budget.

ROLE OF CONSULTANT

The services of a consulting company will be required to:

- Carryout a scientific literature review and preparation of a document that outlines environmental and health concerns, and advantages of alternative management strategies for septage,
- Compile a summary of other jurisdictions regulatory approach and alternative regulatory options for the management of septage,
- Present a summary of the literature review and alternative regulatory strategies to the advisory committee,
- Assist the Chair in preparing the meeting agendas and record of the meeting decisions and consensus.
- Prepare a draft and final recommendation report for committee approval

DISCUSSION PROCESS

Open participation is essential to the success of the Committee. The chair will make every effort to invite all members to comment during discussions. Members are asked to share the “air time” and avoid situations in which only a few members dominate the discussion. Members are also asked to work together to identify all issues and options initially (immediate judgement or blocking is discouraged). Once the Committee is satisfied that ideas are “on the table,” members are encouraged to identify the benefits and costs that should be considered in developing recommendations.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

In order to understand the range of issues and options, every committee member is encouraged to discuss these items with other stakeholders within their sector. Committee members who represent organized stakeholder communities are encouraged to keep those communities informed as the discussion proceeds.

DOCUMENTATION

The consultant will be responsible for documenting all discussions and consolidating the decisions and recommendations into a recommendation report for the Committee. Committee members will make sure of the accuracy of the recommendation report before it is forwarded.

ATTACHMENT 1: STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR INTEREST

Membership	Interest
Alberta Environment - Regional Services (Approval and Enforcement) - Science and Standards Branch	Section 176 of Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (EPEA) outlines the legislative requirements for the disposal of waste. This includes domestic wastewater from residential and commercial facilities collected in septic tanks and hauled away for disposal. Alberta Environment (AENV) Regional offices are the agencies that implement the legislative requirements and standards. AENV Science and Standards Branch (SSB) is the lead agency that develops standards and legislative requirement strategies. Bijan Aidun of SSB will be the chair of the advisory committee.
Academia – U of A, U of C, or one of the colleges	Participation from academia will be sought after to provide scientific input. This is to ensure that up to date and scientifically defensible management strategies are presented for the advisory committee’s consideration.
Septic Haulers	Septic Haulers are the industry sector that will be directly affected by this initiative since they will have to meet the environmental standard and legislative requirements. (This industry does not have an association to represent their interest hence appropriate representation form this industry needs to be identified.)
Alberta Association of Municipal Districts & Counties (AADMC)	The residential dwellings and roadside commercial facilities that are not served by sanitary sewer collection systems and have septic tanks are located in rural areas. The Municipal Districts and Counties are the governing bodies responsible for rural residents.
Albert Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA)	Members of this association are the owners of the approved wastewater facilities where the waste from septic tanks can be disposed. Disposal of septic tank waste into approved municipal wastewater facilities is the best option from both health and environmental perspective. Therefore, availability of these facilities for disposal of septic tank waste needs to be confirmed.
Alberta Onsite Wastewater Contractors’ Association	This association certifies installers of onsite wastewater systems, which include installation of septic tanks. This association has a keen interest to ensure environmentally acceptable maintenance of their systems (e.g. disposal of waste from septic tanks). This association may consider expanding its activities to include haulers.
Safety Codes Council and Alberta Municipal Affairs	These two organizations are the coauthors of the <i>Alberta Private Sewage Systems Standard of Practice</i> that outlines the design requirements and standards for onsite wastewater systems.
Alberta Transportation	This agency is responsible for the management of provincial grants to municipalities for the construction of public wastewater treatment facilities.

Membership	Interest
Alberta Lake Management Society	In the past, this society has expressed concern with the inappropriate disposal of waste near water bodies causing adverse affects on surface water quality.
Alberta Health and Wellness	The management standards developed for the disposal of septic tank waste have to address both environmental and human health issues. Therefore Alberta Health and Wellness' participation will help address issues related to human health.
Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development	Requirements for application of septic waste on land need to address agricultural concerns
Federal Government	A representative from Environment Canada and Health Canada will participate on the advisory committee since the federal government is responsible for national parks and native lands where septage is generated and is often disposed outside of these areas.

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Operating Plan

February 2004

TIMELINES AND MEETINGS

The attached schedule outlines the timelines and meeting dates