

February 17, 2006

PRESCRIBING THE *NUTRIENT* MANAGEMENT ACT, 2002, UNDER THE ENVIRONMENTAL BILL OF RIGHTS

The Ontario government is committed to advancing public participation in environmental decision-making, as well as government transparency and accountability regarding the management of nutrients in the province.

The government's decision to prescribe the Nutrient Management Act, 2002, under the Environmental Bill of Rights will allow residents of Ontario to participate more fully in reviewing environmentally significant regulations under the act. This means that it will now be mandatory for the public to be given at least a 30-day opportunity to comment on proposed changes to the nutrient management legislation and its existing regulation, as well as proposed regulations.

The Nutrient Management Act enhances the protection of Ontario's water resources by minimizing the effects of livestock manure and other nutrients that are stored on farm properties or land applied. The preparation of nutrient management plans and strategies is a key requirement of the Nutrient Management Act. The act provides clear environmental protection guidelines for Ontario's agricultural industry, municipalities and other generators of materials that contain nutrients.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Ministry of the Environment are jointly responsible for implementing the act. The agriculture ministry works closely with farmers to approve nutrient management strategies and to provide training and education. The environment ministry oversees the compliance and enforcement requirements of the Nutrient Management Act.

Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights took effect in February 1994. The Bill of Rights is an important tool to help the people of Ontario to participate in protecting the environment. It establishes a formal framework for notifying the public about proposed legislation, regulations, and policies that could have a significant effect on the environment and then allows for consideration of the public's input before the government makes a final decision on a proposal. The public can also request reviews of government legislation, regulations and policies under the act.

On October 19, 2005, the Ministry of the Environment posted notice on the Environmental Registry to prescribe the Nutrient Management Act, 2002 under Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights. In addition, the ministry notified all 24 members of the Provincial Nutrient Management Advisory Committee of this posting – as well as 19 agricultural and environmental stakeholders and two agricultural publications – to give public and stakeholder groups the opportunity to comment. After a 30-day period, no public comments were received.

A Notice of Decision with regard to prescribing the Nutrient Management Act is posted for information on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry at:
http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env_reg/ebr/english/index.htm.

Contacts:

Anne O'Hagan
Minister's Office
Ministry of the Environment
(416) 325-5809

John Steele
Ministry of the Environment
(416) 314-6666

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