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PROVINCE MARKS WORLD WATER DAY

Ontarians Urged To Do Their Part for Water Conservation and Protection

QUEEN'S PARK — The Ontario government is urging all residents of Ontario to use World Water Day as a reminder to do their part to help preserve the province's valuable water resources and protect our drinking water, Environment Minister Laurel Broten said today.

"Ontario is blessed with one-fifth of the world's fresh water. This great fortune carries with it a shared responsibility to protect our extraordinary natural assets," said Broten. "Keeping pollution and contamination from seeping into our lakes, rivers and aquifers is a mission for all of us to champion."

The government continues to protect water quality in Ontario through:

- Stronger protection of the Great Lakes through a historic agreement that bans diversions and promotes conservation on both sides of the border.
- More effective rules to ban water takings that would remove water from watersheds that already have a high level of use.
- New environmental penalties and a community clean up fund to safeguard against industrial spills that affect local water supplies.
- Investing in science to help local communities undertake water protection planning.
- Introducing the Clean Water Act, which would, if passed, prevent drinking water sources from getting contaminated in the first place.

Ontario has more than a quarter of a million lakes, rivers and streams. It shares the Great Lakes, the Earth's largest system of fresh, surface water. Surface water represents 20 per cent of Ontario's water supplies; the rest originates underground.

World Water Day raises awareness of local and global water issues; the theme of the 4th annual world water forum being held this year in Mexico City is local actions for a global challenge.

"We are acting to protect Ontario's rich water resources now and for the future," said Broten. "By working together we can achieve our goals of keeping our people safe and our water resources clean and plentiful."

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