

For Immediate Release
April 21, 2006

ONTARIO HELPS COMMUNITIES PROTECT DRINKING WATER SOURCES
Government Marks "Earth Week" With Grants to Support Local Water Protection Planning

TORONTO — The McGuinty government is safeguarding the health of Ontario families and communities by supporting the protection of our drinking water sources with grants for scientific studies, Environment Minister Laurel Broten said today.

"Local communities are in the best position to develop water protection plans that work for them," said Broten. "We know their decisions must be based on sound science. This is why we are supporting research and planning efforts in rural and urban communities across the province."

Close to \$10 million in grants for municipalities was announced by the Minister, part of the government's \$67.5 million commitment for source protection planning. Broten was addressing mayors and heads of council at the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Initiative meeting held at Toronto City Hall.

For water systems that draw from surface water, such as the Great Lakes, municipalities will use the funding to map the areas from which intake pipes draw their drinking water, and evaluate the influences and threats to this intake zone.

The proposed Clean Water Act was introduced following broad consultations with municipalities, agriculture, conservation authorities, industry, non-governmental organizations, public health officials, water experts and the public. If passed, it would ensure that communities are able to identify potential risks to their supply of drinking water, and take action to reduce or eliminate these risks.

"Municipalities will have the tools they need to develop and implement local plans to protect the sources of the water their residents drink," said Broten. "The result will be cleaner, safer water supplies and a healthier Ontario."

Today's announcement is just one way the McGuinty government is delivering on our commitment to improve the health of working families across Ontario. By keeping our water clean and helping industry to create less air pollution we're making the environment better for our children and all Ontario families. We all win when we invest in the environment.

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