

For Immediate Release
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LOCAL DRINKING WATER SOURCES PROTECTED *McGuinty Government On The Side Of Ontarians*

BELLEVILLE — The McGuinty government is safeguarding the health of Ontario families and communities by protecting the natural sources of our drinking water, Environment Minister Laurel Broten said today while meeting with officials from Quinte Conservation.

“We’re on the side of Ontario families who are concerned about their health. That’s why we’re giving local communities the help they need 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 both rural and urban communities across the province.”

Earlier this month over \$109,000 was provided to Quinte Conservation to coordinate studies to assess and inventory threats to local municipal drinking water supplies. This is part of the \$67.5 million the government committed for source protection planning in November 2005; close to \$10 million in grants is going to municipalities and their partners this year. In total, Quinte Conservation has received more than \$1.2 million over the past two years to help ensure it is ready to work with communities to develop source protection plans.

“Clean, safe water is fundamental to the health and prosperity of our people and our communities,” said Ernie Parsons, MPP for Prince Edward-Hastings. “We are bringing together the research and the partnerships needed to protect local drinking water supplies.”

“This funding is helping us and our partner municipalities gather information that is vital to developing plans for protecting water supplies in our region,” said Robert Sager, Chair of Quinte Conservation.

“Safe, secure water supplies are critical for healthy, prosperous communities,” said Mary-Anne Sills, Mayor of Belleville. “We are working with the province and our partners in the region to protect our drinking water sources.”

This initiative is just one way the McGuinty government is helping Ontario families stay healthy. Other initiatives include:

- Hiring 33 new full-time water inspectors, investigators and other compliance staff
- Working to prevent illness by banning smoking in public places and workplaces
- Adding three new free-of-charge vaccines for chicken pox, meningococcal disease and pneumococcal disease.

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.

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