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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT TAKING ACTION TO REDUCE THREATS TO DRINKING WATER SOURCES

Rural Ontario Gets A Voice In Funding For Water Protection

PETERBOROUGH – Eleven experts from across rural Ontario will guide the development of a program that will both protect sources of drinking water and meet the needs of rural communities.

“The fund will help farmers and small rural businesses take action to reduce threats to local drinking water sources,” said Environment Minister Laurel Broten. “The advisory panel we have created will assist us in developing a program that best supports water protection in rural Ontario.”

The panel will provide advice on how the funding program should be administered and allocated. Al Lauzon, past chair of the Ontario Rural Council, will head the panel that includes agricultural, municipal and conservation authority representatives.

“People who live in rural communities deserve clean, safe drinking water and they need a say in determining how to protect it,” said Premier Dalton McGuinty, who announced the panel members at the International Plowing Match today.

“This announcement demonstrates that the McGuinty government is prepared to listen and work with farmers to protect our water,” said Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Leona Dombrowsky.

Earlier this month, the government proposed an amendment to Bill 43 (the Clean Water Act) which would enshrine the financial assistance program in legislation. Initially, \$7 million will be available in 2007/08 for early action to protect drinking water:

- \$5 million to support action to protect land and water surrounding municipal water wells and surface water intakes
- \$2 million to support local education and outreach related to source protection planning.

“We all share the responsibility for protecting drinking water sources,” said Broten. “Making it easier for people who live and work in rural communities to do their part means better protection of the environment and public health in rural Ontario.”

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