

For Immediate Release
December 7, 2006

PROVINCE PROPOSES NEW RULES FOR MANAGING WASTE MORE EFFECTIVELY

Faster 'Yes' Or 'No' Will Save Time And Money While Protecting Environment

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is moving forward on its promise to improve the environmental assessment process and encourage innovative waste solutions, Environment Minister Laurel Broten announced today.

“An improved environmental assessment process will protect the environment while saving time and money for well-planned waste projects by delivering a faster ‘yes’ or a faster ‘no’,” Broten said. “This initiative will clarify the process that must be followed and remove the uncertainty that currently exists.”

The proposed new rules would apply equally to public and private sector waste proposals. Previously, private sector landfills and other waste projects had to be specifically designated by regulation as subject to the requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act. This will make the process clear, consistent and transparent for municipalities, the private waste industry and the public.

These proposed changes will:

- Support waste diversion efforts by exempting composting and recycling facilities from the environmental assessment process if accepting under 1,000 tonnes of waste per day.
- Encourage innovative technologies by streamlining the EA process for pilot projects which have demonstrated they are environmentally-friendly and can meet the ministry’s stringent air emissions standards.
- Help small rural and northern Ontario municipalities manage their waste better by allowing landfill expansions of between 40,000 and 100,000 cubic metres to go through an environmental screening process.
- Deliver faster decisions for proponents building environmentally-sound, state-of-the-art medium sized landfills and thermal facilities generating energy. These projects could see time savings of 12 to 18 months.

Large landfills and thermal facilities without an energy component would remain subject to an individual environmental assessment.

Waste projects will continue to require approval under the Environmental Protection Act and other legislation. Any project with potential emissions must meet the ministry's stringent air emission standards. In addition, thermal or energy-from-waste facilities will need to meet the stringent standards laid out in the ministry's combustion and air pollution control guideline.

"Our goal is to support both municipal and private sector efforts to deal effectively with waste disposal," Broten said. "We must encourage 21st century solutions for managing the waste we produce, while ensuring that our water, air and public health are protected."

The public is invited to comment on the draft waste regulation and its accompanying guide. They are available on the Environmental Registry at www.ene.gov.on.ca/envregistry/028964er.htm. The deadline for comments is March 7, 2007.

Improving the environmental assessment process is one way the McGuinty government is working for a cleaner environment, healthier communities and a stronger economy in Ontario. Other initiatives include:

- Introducing a deposit-refund program for beverage alcohol containers.
- Protecting Ontario's drinking water by passing the Clean Water Act.
- A plan to include five per cent ethanol in gasoline that takes effect January 1, 2007 which will help reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions by about 800,000 tonnes.

- 30 -

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