

Ed Houghton
Ontario Municipal Water Association
Executive Director, Ontario Municipal Water Association (OMWA)
2593 Tenth Concession, Collingwood, ON, L9Y 3Y9

Dear Mr. Houghton:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the issues facing our water in this province. I am happy to respond on behalf of the Green Party of Ontario.

Ontario Municipal Water Association

1. Does your party have a policy for water management in Ontario? (and if so can you please provide a copy of your statement to share with our members).

The Green Party supports the public ownership and control of water in Ontario.

We believe in prioritizing public drinking water for communities and people first when making water use decisions in the province.

We need to create a priority of use list for issuing water-taking permits, as well as establish rules that take into consideration the externalized costs of water-taking activities, such as ecosystem needs, cumulative impacts, pollution, waste, and contamination threats. We also need to raise water taking fees to recover costs for sustainable water management in our province.

We also need to ensure that water use decisions incorporate sources of knowledge such as cumulative impacts, community values, citizen science, and traditional knowledge, and that we revise water tests and models to account for unpredictable changes in historical patterns due to climate change.

Lastly, we must ensure that non-essential uses of pumping water are turned off first when low water conditions are identified, and fix the Ontario Low Water Response Plan so that level 3 water restrictions are declared and implemented in cases of drought or low water emergencies.

2. Does your party policy include provisions for:

- **Stormwater management?**

The Green Party would mandate the use of permeable pavement for all new parking spaces to reduce flooding from storm runoff.

- **Backflow prevention?**

The Green Party supports the mandatory implementation of backflow prevention devices on specific property categories.

- **Managing lead levels in drinking water?**

The Green Party supports lead testing, corrosion control, lead pipe removal, and faucet filtration as standard measures across the province.

- **Microplastics in water and the environment?**

We must invest in the monitoring and protection of the Great Lakes, including long-term funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and other programs protecting the lakes.

We also need to reduce our usage of harmful plastics that eventually end up in our water supply. The Green Party would phase out the single-use bottled water industry in Ontario within ten years. We also support a bottle deposit program for single use containers.

- **Climate change mitigation?**

The Green Party applies a climate lens to all planning decisions, environmental assessments, and planning laws in working to transition our communities to a fossil fuel free future. We support several actions to put Ontario on a path to becoming carbon neutral by 2050. You can read more about our climate mitigation plans at www.gpo.ca/vision/planet.

- **Controlling inflow & infiltration to reduce wastewater spills & bypassing?**

The Green Party would require major municipalities to eliminate combined sewer overflows and sewage bypasses that discharge raw sewage into waterways during high volumes of flow.

- **First Nations' water issues?**

We respect the duty to consult Indigenous communities when developing water-taking rules.

Environmental racism must be addressed through the explicit recognition in environmental protection processes that low-income, Indigenous, and other communities are disproportionately impacted by pollution and environmental damage. Mercury poisoning near Grassy Narrows and air pollution near Aamjiwnaang in Southwestern Ontario are just two examples of this.

The Green Party would hold the province to its commitment to resolve and clean up the mercury contamination in the English-Wabigoon River system, which has been poisoning the people of Grassy Narrows First Nation and White Dog First Nation.

3. Does your party have plans for helping Ontario municipal water suppliers sustainably maintain and improve their water infrastructure? If so, please provide your policy statements to share with our members.

We need to address the aging water infrastructure in municipalities across Ontario. We support increasing water taking fees to fund water management in our province. A portion of this water taking fee would be directed to municipalities to help fund sustainable water management and improvements for water infrastructure.

Please visit www.gpo.ca/vision/planet to read more about our vision for water in Ontario. You can also read our platform at www.gpo.ca/platform.

Do not hesitate to reach out to us with any further questions.

Sincerely,

Samantha Bird
Director of Operations
Green Party of Ontario