



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Committee of the Whole  
FROM: Erin Mahoney, Commissioner of Environmental Services  
DATE: May 14, 2015  
RE: **2013-2014 Ontario Chief Drinking Water Inspector's Report and Committee of the Whole Follow-up Letter**

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This memo provides an update to the March 2015 Committee of the Whole presentation on the Integrated Management System and the Ontario Chief Drinking Water Inspector's annual report. As requested by Committee of the Whole, staff submitted a request to the Chief Drinking Water Inspector to expedite future releases of the Chief Drinking Water Inspector's report (see Attachment 1).

In following up with the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (Ministry), Environmental Services staff received a request from the Chief Drinking Water Inspector to discuss Committee of the Whole feedback and to share good news regarding process changes the Ministry has made with respect to the Chief Drinking Water Inspector's annual report.

### **Chief Drinking Water Inspector is committed to continuous improvement and plans to release reports in a more timely manner**

York Region staff participated in a meeting with Sue Lo, Chief Drinking Water Inspector for the Province of Ontario in late March to relay Committee's comments and discuss opportunities for improvement. The Chief Drinking Water Inspector acknowledged Committee's feedback and indicated a commitment to continuous improvement, especially with improving timing of report release.

The Chief Drinking Water Inspector indicated that Ministry staff have worked hard to improve inspection reporting timelines and revealed that 2013-2014 reports would be issued shortly. Ministry staff are also examining ways to streamline their reporting to focus on making report data more accessible to citizens. Regional staff see this as a positive step and look forward to inspection data becoming available on a quarterly or bi-annual basis.

**Regional staff have offered to continue to work with Ministry staff to identify continuous improvement opportunities for Ministry and Municipal annual reporting to enhance public access to water quantity and quality data**

York Region is committed to enhancing the availability of water quality and quantity data. Through recent discussions with the provincial Chief Drinking Water Inspector, staff expressed an interest in collaborating on initiatives to improve access to water related data aligning with public service trends to provide the public with better access to government generated data.

**York Region demonstrates its commitment to high quality drinking water and receives top marks in Ontario Chief Drinking Water Inspector's 2013-2014 annual report**

As alluded to above, the Ontario Chief Drinking Water Inspector released the 2013-2014 Annual Report on April 22, 2015. York Region received the highest scores in the Greater Toronto Area for the third consecutive year. York Region achieved a compliance score on Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change inspections of 99.96 per cent and a score of 99.99 per cent on samples meeting provincial water quality standards as shown in Table 1. City of Toronto and Peel Region, who provide drinking water to York Region, also received high scores as summarized below. York Region's continued commitment to deliver high quality drinking water has contributed to the Region's continued top ranking in the Chief Drinking Water Inspector's Annual Report for 2013-2014.

**Table 1**

**Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Inspection Ratings for Four Greater Toronto Area Municipalities**

Municipality	2012-13 Inspection Rating (%*)	2013-14 Inspection Rating (%*)	2012-13 Drinking Water Quality (% Tests Meeting Standards)*	2013-14 Drinking Water Quality (% Tests Meeting Standards)*
York Region	100.00	99.96	100.00	99.99
Durham	100.00	99.73	99.96	99.95
Peel	99.35	98.21	99.96	99.94
Toronto	98.38	97.93	99.91	99.75

\*Note: Average scores for all systems within regional jurisdiction.

York Region continues to deliver on its commitment to provide high quality drinking water to Region residents and businesses with top marks from the Ontario Chief Drinking Water Inspector. Staff will continue to work with the Ministry to align next year's report with the 2015 Annual Drinking Water System Summary Report that staff plan to bring to Committee of the Whole in March 2016.

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Erin Mahoney, M. Eng  
Commissioner, Environmental Services

Attachment

DS/BM

Copy to: Sue Lo, Ontario Chief Drinking Water Inspector/Assistant Deputy Minister, Drinking Water Management Division

#6019844



Environmental Services

March 30, 2015

Sue Lo  
Ontario Chief Drinking Water Inspector  
Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change  
Drinking Water Management Division  
135 St. Clair Avenue W., 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto Ontario, M4V 1M2

Dear Ms. Lo:

**RE: Reporting Timelines for Chief Drinking Water Inspector's Annual Report**

On March 12, 2015 York Region staff presented the Annual Drinking Water System Summary Report to York Region Committee of the Whole as required under Section 11 and Schedule 22 of the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002*. This report included a summary of results of the 2012-2013 Chief Drinking Water Inspector's Annual Report (Inspector's Report). During the Committee discussion, Councillors raised questions related to reporting periods for these reports, which resulted in a motion to send this correspondence to the Chief Drinking Water Inspector.

**Chief Drinking Water Inspector's Annual Report provides vital information to help Regional Councillors better meet Standard of Care requirements**

The Inspector's Report provides Councillors with additional information to help them better meet their Standard of Care requirements under Section 19 of the *Safe Drinking Act, 2002*. Specifically, the Inspector's Report supports Councillor's oversight requirements under Section 11 of the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002*, including monitoring compliance with reporting requirements as prescribed or required by conditions in licenses or approvals issued by the Ministry for drinking water systems.

**York Region Council requests regulated municipal reporting timelines and release of Chief Drinking Water Report be better aligned**

The Inspector's Report encompasses many aspects outlined in the *Act* related to Standard of Care requirements. The report provides an important secondary review from a third-party to help supplement information included in staff reports. However, based on existing reporting timelines, it is challenging to effectively use this information to attain a fulsome picture on the health of the drinking water system.



**System owners required to report on a calendar year and Chief Drinking Water Inspector reports based on fiscal year**

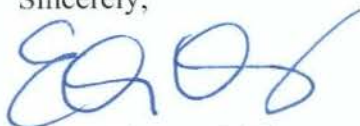
Section 11 and Schedule 22 require staff to report water quality and quantity data based on the calendar year, and these reports must be prepared and made publically available by February 28 and March 31 respectively. In comparison the Chief Drinking Water Inspector's Annual Report is based on the previous provincial fiscal year. This lack of alignment makes it difficult for Councillors to effectively compare results from regulated water quality and quantity reports generated by municipal staff and the Chief Drinking Water Inspector's report.

Due to the significant offset of reporting periods (fiscal versus calendar year) and the time between the report period and the Inspector's report being released (most recently eighteen months after completion of the reporting period), Council is requesting better time alignment which would enable Council to meet their Standard of Care requirements as all information would be readily available on the system at the same time. As a result, Council requests that the Chief Drinking Water Inspector's reporting timelines shift from the current fiscal year format to a calendar year format to improve comparability of Provincial results to data presented in staff reports as required under the regulation.

In the opinion of York Regional Council, these changes will help ensure the continued safety of drinking water in Ontario by providing additional timely comparison of water quality findings and facilitate better oversight related to drinking water quality. Further, staff would like to work with the Ministry to explore potential opportunities for moving Section 11 and Schedule 22 reporting to an open data model to improve public access and use of water quantity and quality data.

York Region thanks the Province for consideration of this change and looks forward to the opportunity for continued consultation with the Province moving forward. Should there are any questions regarding this matter, please contact David Szeptycki, Head of Strategy, Liaison, and Policy Implementation at [david.szeptycki@york.ca](mailto:david.szeptycki@york.ca).

Sincerely,



Erin Mahoney, M.Eng.  
Commissioner, Environmental Services  
Regional Municipality of York

BM

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