

**Environment Canada Proposed Regulatory Framework for Wastewater, Consultation Document, October 2007**

**CCME Canada-wide Strategy for the Management of Municipal Wastewater Effluent, draft September 2007**

**National Report  
Wastewater Consultations  
November 2007 to January 2008**

***Summary of Input***

**July 2008  
Environment Canada**

## Acknowledgements

Environment Canada would like to acknowledge the time and effort that so many individuals put into the consultations. The thoughtful insights and comments that were provided to us during the consultation sessions and through other feedback mechanisms are much appreciated. In particular, we would like to thank the respected Elders of Aboriginal communities who participated in the sessions, for their opening and closing prayers, and for sharing their views with us.

EXCERPT

## Executive Summary

Environment Canada's Proposed Regulatory Framework for wastewater is based on the core elements of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment Canada-wide Strategy for the Management of Municipal Wastewater Effluents (CCME Strategy) and includes wastewater effluent regulations and other risk management actions. This framework outlines how Environment Canada plans to implement the elements of the CCME Strategy that relate to federal jurisdiction.

Over the period November 13<sup>th</sup> 2007 to January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Environment Canada held a series of 26 one-day consultation sessions in locations across the country. Other forms of feedback were also welcomed. The objectives of these sessions were to provide participants with contextual information and an opportunity to comment on the draft CCME Strategy, and Environment Canada's Proposed Regulatory Framework for Wastewater (EC Framework).

The consultation sessions targeted three "streams" of interested parties, Aboriginal peoples and their organizations, municipalities and organizations, and federal departments and agencies. All participants were provided with a report on what was heard at the particular session they attended. The National Consultation Report presents a summary of the key messages and issues that were raised during the consultation sessions and in written submissions sent to Environment Canada.

Environment Canada has focused much attention on consultations with Aboriginal peoples and their organizations. Consultation sessions have been held at 21 different locations, and Environment Canada has put in place contracts with the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nation Chiefs to prepare impact analysis documents and position papers.

Comments received at the various consultation sessions, and through written submissions covered a broad range of issues and perspectives. Comments from the different streams were similar in many instances, but were also divergent in others. Several overarching themes emerged and included the approach followed to consult, roles and responsibilities, funding, and capacity. The last three themes were universal; concerns about the extent and appropriateness of the approach followed to consult were raised primarily by Aboriginal peoples and their organizations.

Participants provided detailed and insightful feedback, and Environment Canada did not perceive any "show stopper" issues regarding its Proposed Regulatory Framework. There was general support expressed for the need to improve wastewater management. Many comments sought to ensure clarification on a number of issues relating to implementation, particularly on roles and responsibilities, and funding. There was dissatisfaction expressed over the scope

of the EC Framework, with many participants feeling it needed broader application – beyond discharges to surface water. In that regard, wide support was expressed for including pathogens and to a lesser extent phosphorus, as national performance standards. All streams raised concerns regarding capacity, and that help would be needed before implementation could begin.

Industrial inputs were identified as needing a clearer definition. There was general support for monitoring; Environment Canada was advised to consider the capacity of communities, and to build on existing programs. Combined sewer overflows were viewed as a concern, with varying advice on how they should be managed.

With respect to timelines, Environment Canada received a spectrum of advice. Regarding risk factors to determine timelines, there was a general opinion that a better consideration of the receiving environment was needed, as well as a consideration of cumulative effects.

General support was expressed for the proposed approach to acute lethality and ammonia; however opinions were mixed on timelines to address failures. There was also general support for establishing performance standards specific to the north, but there was not agreement on how to define where these standards would apply.

Participants were generally supportive of establishing site specific requirements that would be in addition to the national performance standards, and favoured a method that adopted a watershed approach, and considered cumulative effects. Participants were also supportive of the concept of harmonization, and “one window”, but advised Environment Canada to make sure that the right people “are at the table”, and that roles/responsibilities needed to be clearly defined.

With respect to risk management actions for wastewater systems under federal authority, or on federal Land or on aboriginal Land, Environment Canada was encouraged to focus attention on operator training and certification, biosolids, as well as other aspects of treatment system operation.

Participants expressed concern about chemicals that were not removed by secondary sewage treatment, and supported actions relating to pollution prevention and source control. In addition, Environment Canada was advised that federal action should be taken to eliminate such chemicals from wastewater discharges.

Environment Canada will consider all of the feedback received from interested parties to finalize negotiations with provincial and territorial governments on the CCME Strategy and to finalize elements of its Proposed Regulatory Framework for Wastewater. Further opportunity for comment by interested parties will occur

as the proposed wastewater effluent regulations under the *Fisheries Act* are developed.

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