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**For Information**

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**REPORT TITLE: 2021 Annual Drinking Water Systems Summary Report**

**FROM: Kealy Dedman, Commissioner of Public Works**

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**OBJECTIVE**

To provide an update on the performance of the Region of Peel's drinking water systems and status of regulatory compliance under Ontario Regulation 170/03 (O.Reg.170/03) of the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002* (the *Act*).

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- Region staff prepared a Summary Report for Regional Council by March 31<sup>st</sup> as required by Ontario legislation.
  - Region staff are committed to excellence in the supply of drinking water which is demonstrated by high performance scores in the 2021 drinking water system inspections by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.
  - The Region of Peel achieved its compliance obligations under the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002*, and with the requirements of all legislated approvals for municipal drinking water systems, except for the instances summarized in Appendix I to this report, which did not adversely impact drinking water safety.
  - The Region's drinking water systems continue to meet water consumption demands within compliance limits.
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**DISCUSSION**

**1. Background**

Under Schedule 22 of O.Reg.170/03, Region staff must prepare a Summary Report for the Municipality and present it to the municipality's Council by March 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. The report must disclose compliance with the terms and conditions of licences, permits and the requirements of the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002* (the *Act*) and its Regulations. Regulatory requirements that a drinking water system fails to meet must be summarized along with the corrective measures taken.

Under the *Act*, through Compliance and Enforcement Regulation (O.Reg. 242/05), the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (the Ministry) is responsible for inspecting all municipal residential drinking water systems annually to confirm compliance with the regulatory requirements. Failure to implement corrective action or reoccurrence of significant non-compliant incidents may result in penalties under the *Act*.

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### **2. Statement of Compliance with the Requirements of the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002***

The Region regularly assesses existing and potential risks to its drinking water systems to identify improvement opportunities and implement measures to prevent non-compliance incidents from reoccurring.

In 2021, the Region demonstrated compliance with the legislative requirements except for the events summarized in Appendix I. The minor incidents included documentation lacking complete work/event details, equipment maintenance shortcomings, and water from watermain breaks washing silt into nearby waterways. These occurrences did not impact the safety of drinking water supplied to consumers and posed low risk to public health. The integrity and the overall performance of drinking water systems has been unaffected and control measures put in place include actions that reduce the likelihood of these incidents reoccurring in the future.

The Region's drinking water systems continue to meet water consumption demands within compliance limits set in the Licences and Permits to Take Water issued by the Ministry.

The overview of the drinking water systems performance was documented in the 2021 Summary Report, which has been posted on the Region's water quality webpage: [www.peelregion.ca/pw/water/quality/reports/](http://www.peelregion.ca/pw/water/quality/reports/).

### **3. 2021 Water Quality Reports**

O.Reg.170/03 under the *Act* prescribes requirements to monitor, test and report drinking water quality information. Every year, a report must be prepared for the preceding calendar year that presents the overall quality of drinking water supply, events of adverse test results, and corrective actions taken. The report must be made available to the public by February 28<sup>th</sup> of each year.

As required, the Region prepared 2021 Water Quality Reports for each of its drinking water systems and made them available to the public on the Region of Peel website [www.peelregion.ca/pw/water/quality/reports/](http://www.peelregion.ca/pw/water/quality/reports/). Paper copies of the reports are available upon request.

All annual reports confirm that the Region has maintained its commitment to provide quality drinking water to consumers throughout the reporting period.

### **4. Water System Inspections by the Ministry**

Every year, the Ministry performs an extensive physical inspection of all seven municipal drinking water systems in the Region. Each inspection takes several days to complete and includes thorough review of:

- documents, records, and administrative practices and policies
- water sample collection practices, testing and treatment standards
- water treatment and distribution process and equipment performance
- staff competency and licensing requirements

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to verify that the Region drinking water systems are operated in compliance with provincial legislation.

In addition, Region staff conduct regular self-audits of drinking water facilities that may identify any inconsistencies with compliance requirements. Findings of deviation from legislation and self-declared non-compliance events are corrected immediately and reported to the Ministry and the Medical Officer of Health demonstrating transparency and promoting trust and confidence.

During the COVID-19 state of emergency, the Ministry permitted limited operational flexibility through approval of temporary regulatory relief, which remained in place until November 1, 2021. Some temporary relief items involved modification of practices to avoid physical contact between Regional staff and the public/contractors to protect the health and safety of all. This included suspension of tap water sample collection from homes and businesses from March 2020 until November 1, 2021. As a result, testing in homes and businesses was paused for the Community Lead Testing Program in 2021 while water samples from the water distribution system were collected and tested as required. Despite the pause, high-priority lead testing requests arising from public health risk-based assessments were completed, and associated tap water samples collected and tested.

The Community Lead Testing Program was established in 2008 in accordance with O.Reg.170/03 under the *Act* with number of homes and businesses (private plumbing) and water distribution system locations tested per Ministry's standard sampling protocol. Results of testing in the first years of the program consistently met the provincial water quality criteria qualifying the Region for transition to reduced sampling protocol in the South Peel (lake-based) drinking water system and full exemption from testing homes and businesses in the Caledon groundwater systems.

To date, test results demonstrate the Region's drinking water supplies do not have elevated levels of lead. The temporary pause in collection of tap water samples did not impact the quality of Region's water supply and service delivery.

Ministry inspection results received to date for 2021 have demonstrated excellent performance ratings. The balance of the drinking water system inspection ratings are summarized as follows:

Drinking Water System / Water Works	2021 Ministry Inspection Rating
Caledon Village – Alton	96.32%
Palgrave – Caledon East	100%
Cheltenham	100%
Inglewood	100%
Arthur P. Kennedy Water Treatment Plant	100%
Lorne Park Water Treatment Plant	100%
South Peel Distribution	93.46%

### RISK CONSIDERATIONS

Inability to modernize operational and quality management practices may result in findings of deficiencies and create greater risk of non-compliance.

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The Ministry is working with municipal partners to enhance drinking water protection and compliance framework through the implementation of best management practices to the operations and management of drinking water systems, some of which include:

- the use of electronic logbooks and digital information management,
- implementation of controls to improve cybersecurity,
- lifecycle management of water infrastructure assets to ensure state of good repair and long-term sustainability while balancing levels of service and risk

The Region is committed to advancing its tools and processes to align with current information and technology to achieve operational compliance obligations in protection of human health and the natural environment.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Region of Peel has maintained compliance with the terms and conditions of all Licences, Permits, the *Act* and its Regulations except for a few minor non-health related events which are summarized in the attached Appendix I. These events did not compromise the integrity of the drinking water supply or public health. Appropriate corrective action was immediately taken, and control measures implemented to prevent reoccurrence of the events.

Drinking water systems continued to operate effectively throughout 2021 amid added demands resulting from safety measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Region of Peel is committed to the ongoing provision of quality drinking water to its consumers and to maintain compliance with all applicable legislative requirements.

### **APPENDICES**

Appendix I - 2021 Summary of Non-Compliance Events

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