

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

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# STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**ONTARIO CLEAN WATER AGENCY**  
(Section 3.12, 2008 Annual Report of the Auditor General of Ontario)

1<sup>st</sup> Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament  
58 Elizabeth II

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The Honourable Steve Peters, MPP  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Sir,

Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts has the honour to present its Report and commends it to the House.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Norm. Sterling'.

Norman W. Sterling, MPP  
Chair

Queen's Park  
January 2010

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

**MEMBERSHIP LIST**

1<sup>st</sup> Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

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Chair

**TED ARNOTT**  
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**DAVID RAMSAY**

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Katch Koch  
Clerk of the Committee

Susan Viets  
Research Officer

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**  
**LIST OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

LAURA ALBANESE was replaced by DAVID RAMSAY on September 15, 2009.

ERNIE HARDEMAN was replaced by TED ARNOTT on September 15, 2009.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA) is a Crown agency that was established in 1993 to provide reliable and cost-effective drinking-water and wastewater services primarily to municipalities on a cost-recovery basis. Service provision is also intended to protect human health and the environment. In his audit report, the Auditor General (Auditor) noted that OCWA generally had adequate procedures to provide effective services and is progressing in achieving full cost-recovery. The Auditor did note some issues related, for example, to wastewater discharge, reviews and audits, operator certificates and licenses, contracts, reporting, performance measures, and identification of drinking water quality systemic issues.

In April 2009, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts held public hearings on the Auditor's audit report. Senior officials from the Ministry of the Environment (Ministry) and OCWA appeared before the Committee. (For a transcript of the proceedings, see Committee *Hansard*, April 1, 2009.) This Committee report highlights the Auditor's observations and recommendations, and presents the Committee's findings, views, and recommendations. The Committee requests that the Ministry or the Agency addressed provide the Committee Clerk with a written response to each recommendation within 120 calendar days of the tabling of this report with the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, unless otherwise specified in a recommendation.

The Committee endorses the Auditor's findings and recommendations and would also like to thank the Auditor and his team for drawing attention to these important drinking-water and wastewater issues.

## OVERVIEW

There are almost 1,200 municipal drinking-water systems (treatment facility and distribution) and wastewater systems (treatment facility and collection) in Ontario. OCWA operates 24% of the former and 36% of the latter. It also operates a small number of commercial, industrial, and institutional facilities and manages oversight services for several First Nations communities. OCWA is headquartered in Toronto, employs almost 700 staff members, and has 20 regional hub or satellite offices.

OCWA has three major lines of business: operations and maintenance services to owners; engineering and technical services to support the installation of new and improved clean water infrastructure; and standby emergency services to provide first response to drinking water emergencies anywhere in the province. OCWA's 2007 revenue was almost \$120 million. Its net income was \$6.6 million (\$7.9 million in financing income, offset by an operating loss of \$1.3 million).

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE AUDITOR'S AUDIT**

The objective of the Auditor's audit was to assess whether OCWA

- has adequate oversight and management procedures in place to ensure that it provides effective drinking-water and wastewater treatment services cost-effectively and in compliance with legislation and corporate policy; and
- that it measures and reports on its performance.

## **ISSUES RAISED IN THE AUDIT AND BEFORE THE COMMITTEE**

Significant issues were raised by the audit and before the Committee. We attach particular importance to those issues discussed below.

### **Drinking-Water and Wastewater Testing**

#### *Drinking-Water Testing*

At OCWA-operated facilities, OCWA staff members are responsible for routinely collecting water samples to be sent to accredited laboratories for testing. Water may be tested for microbiological, chemical, radiological, physical and aesthetic substances. The Auditor noted that 99.6% of OCWA drinking-water samples tested met legislated standards for quality. On average, 99.9% of samples from all other drinking-water systems operated either directly by municipalities or by private sector operators met quality standards.

#### **Invasive Organisms**

The Ministry has recently focused on invasive species of algae, including blue-green algae. It has identified cryptosporidium as an emerging issue and focuses on mitigation strategies, such as putting ultra-filtration systems into place.

#### *Adverse Drinking-Water-Quality Incidents*

The Auditor recommended that OCWA should formally review adverse water-quality incidents to determine whether there are any systemic issues necessitating changes to its operating structures. He also suggested that OCWA should improve procedures to help ensure the accuracy of data presented in annual reports to system owners and the public.

#### **Systemic Issues**

OCWA said that it is focusing on systemic issues. In the past, issue identification occurred at the hub level. This now occurs at the corporate level, with OCWA ensuring that useful operational information reaches all levels of the organization.

#### **Annual Number of Adverse Water Quality Incidents**

According to Ministry data, there were 0.17% water quality incidents in the more than 500,000 samples it received in the 2006-07 fiscal year, which the Ministry



described as a very tiny percentage. It noted that an adverse water quality incident does not mean that drinking water is unsafe. An incident means there has been an exceedance but if left unabated, there is a potential problem.

Municipalities are required by regulation to report adverse water quality incidents to the Ministry. The notification process is stringent, with immediate notification verbally by the laboratory to the Ministry and to the local medical officer of health. This ensures that both have direct responsibility for providing guidance to the operator/owner. When the Ministry receives notification of an exceedance, it said that it works with owners and operators to resolve the cause.

The Ministry also has a division (with inspectors) that concentrates on drinking water. In district and regional offices, the inspectors conduct both planned and unplanned inspections to catch unreported incidents and to work with those who have reported incidents.

### Drinking Water Safety Net

The Ministry noted various provincial initiatives to ensure safe drinking water including

- the *Safe Drinking Water Act*, which stipulates requirements for enhanced certification of operators and training (the Ministry noted that Ontario is the best, regarding requirements, among such jurisdictions as New York State, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands);
- work on implementing all 121 of Commissioner Dennis O'Connor's recommendations in his report on the inquiry into the Walkerton water *E. coli* contamination case ( 38 source water protection planning exercises are included in recently passed clean water legislation);
- the work of the Ontario Drinking Water Advisory Council;
- investments in capital infrastructure (the Ministry advocates for investment to counterparts in the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure and the federal government); and
- Ontario's decision to embrace a new federal wastewater effluent standard, which will have a protective effect on municipalities that draw their drinking water from surface waters.

The Ministry said that since Walkerton, the drinking water safety net that has been put in place ensures that the Ministry is notified of adverse water quality incidents, that there is proper testing, and that the Ministry responds as quickly and effectively as it can. It also commented, in response to Committee questions, on the procedures for municipalities to add or remove fluoride to drinking water (see Committee *Hansard* pp. 305-306 for details).

## Source Water

The Auditor noted that most drinking-water contaminants are present in the source water that is supplied to the treatment plant and that the treatment plant operator has limited control over the quality of source water. The Auditor noted that removal of contaminants is partly related to design of the treatment plant. Chemical, radiological, and physical/aesthetic exceedances can result from treatment plants with no technological capability to remove them.

The Ministry confirmed that the design of a plant may not allow for the removal of substances, such as iron in source water. It said this would not necessarily pose a risk to health, as could be the case with microbiological issues. The Ministry discussed its radiological parameters saying that many, including tritium levels, are monitored on a regular basis. Standards have been established through the Ministry, working collaboratively with the federal government.

## Microbiological Exceedances

Procedures and treatment plants focus on identifying and treating microbiological exceedances; the operator has most control in addressing microbiological issues which present the greatest risk to human health. The Auditor noted that OCWA had fewer microbiological exceedances than other facilities.

The chair of OCWA's board said that microbiological issues are a key board focus. He noted that OCWA had about 70 microbiological exceedances at its facilities in the 2007-08 fiscal year in comparison with 145 in the 2006-07 fiscal year. The chair described this decline as significant progress. The goal is zero incidents. The board wants to track incidents by geography and by client facility to identify trends and be proactive. According to OCWA representatives, increased operator vigilance, better training programs, ensuring good standard operating procedures, and a focus on continuous improvement have all contributed to the decline in microbiological incidents.

## Supplementary Information

The Ministry provided additional information, listed in Figure 1 below, on the total number of microbiological exceedances for municipal residential drinking water systems.

Fiscal Year	Number of Exceedances: OCWA Operated Systems (approximately 170 facilities)	Number of Exceedances: Other Systems (approximately 530 facilities)
2005-06	172	800
2006-07	145	530
2007-08	72	385

Data from the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario indicates that in the 2006/07 fiscal year there were 173 OCWA operated drinking-water treatment facilities and 534 drinking-water treatment facilities operated by others.

### **Committee Recommendation**

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that:

- 1. The Ministry of the Environment shall report to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on measures that the Ministry is undertaking to share best practices for managing microbiological exceedances at drinking water facilities that are derived from the experiences of both the Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA) and other operators with all drinking water facility operators across the province.**

### **Wastewater Testing**

The Auditor noted that acceptable limits of contaminants listed in Ministry-issued Certificates of Approval are unique to each facility. If a facility does not have a Certificate, then Ministry guidelines apply. Some wastewater incidents occur from bypasses, where sewage is diverted from the treatment process and discharged into the environment without being fully treated. Some incidents occur from overflows, usually during periods of higher than normal rainfall, when the amount of wastewater that flows through a treatment facility exceeds the maximum amount of water that the plant was designed to handle. Other incidents result from discharge exceedances. The Auditor recommended that OCWA identify the causes of bypass, overflow and discharge exceedance incidents to determine if there are any operational measures that could be taken to reduce such incidents. He also recommended periodic reporting to senior management, including proposed corrective actions.

OCWA noted that the owner designs the system and may, for example, have the storm water system hooked in with the sanitary sewer system. The Ministry said that 106 Ontario municipalities have combined sewer systems. Different municipalities have different capacities, design standards, budgets and priorities. Even with new systems, there is infiltration through joints because sewer pipes are not under pressure. Such factors as high groundwater levels can increase the inflow into pipes, affecting plant capacity. Plants are designed to have bypasses to prevent sewage systems from being pressurized, which could result in backups into people's houses.

### **Reporting Overflows**

The Ministry requires all owners and operators who have exceedances to report to the Ministry. It has a spills action centre that operates 24/7. The Ministry ensures that downstream municipalities are informed of these incidents and take precautionary measures. The Ministry asks municipalities with combined sewer systems to develop a pollution prevention and control plan to help avoid bypasses.

The Committee requested information on an exceedance incident in Ottawa in 2006 involving a gate malfunction. The Ministry said that Ottawa received fines in excess of half a million dollars for the incident. It added that Ottawa is currently implementing a real-time control project for immediate response and that information reported on incidents and spills is public information.

### Supplementary Information

The City of Ottawa's Office of the Auditor General noted the following in its *Audit of the 2006 Sewage Spill*:

Once the event had occurred and had been corrected, a culture of not understanding the significance of sewage spills took over and the 2006 event was never viewed as noteworthy. It is our opinion that this represents incompetence on the part of the managers involved. Knowledge of the event was never escalated from Managers to their Directors and onto executive management, as one would expect given the magnitude of the spill. Furthermore, the event was never reported to the MOE – as required by law – until 8 to 9 months later.<sup>1</sup>

### Reporting Overflows (continued)

The Committee wanted to ensure public notification of such incidents in a timely fashion. The Ministry said that if a health risk is identified, the medical officer of health will determine appropriate public notification.

The Ministry said there are two exceptions when municipalities are not required to report. The first is when notification is provided in advance of a bypass resulting from planned maintenance. The second is when municipalities with combined sewers have a pollution prevention control plan (as referred to above) in place.

### Committee Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that:

- 2. The Ministry of the Environment make data on bypass, overflow and discharge exceedances publicly available on its website. The Ministry shall provide the Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report specifying how this data will be measured in part, or in total, and how long it will take to post that data on the Ministry website.**

<sup>1</sup> City of Ottawa, City of Ottawa Office of the Auditor General, *Audit of the 2006 Sewage Spill*, p. iv. Internet site at [http://www.ottawa.ca/city\\_hall/mayor\\_council/auditor\\_general/audit\\_reports/2008/images/sewage\\_spill\\_en.pdf](http://www.ottawa.ca/city_hall/mayor_council/auditor_general/audit_reports/2008/images/sewage_spill_en.pdf), accessed 28 October 2009. (The report posted on the internet site is marked "Draft and Confidential.")

### Advising Municipalities

The Committee asked whether OCWA advises municipalities if it thinks that options exist to reduce overflows. For example, OCWA might recommend sewer-eavestrough separation or the use of water meters. One Committee member who was a former town mayor said that his town's daily water usage had been up to one million gallons but was reduced to 250,000 gallons after water meter installation.

Mr. Garrett, the chair of the board of OCWA, said that he is a fan of 100% user fees (metered billing for water). He believes this has a direct impact on water conservation. However, Mr. Garrett said that the user fee decision is made by the municipal council, not OCWA. OCWA invoices the municipality and the municipality decides whether it wishes to raise money to pay for the operating contract by implementing a user fee or through a combined system of user fees and taxes, or some other option.

### Low-risk Effluent Operations (Fish Hatcheries)

The Ministry operates under a Certificate of Approval system developed in the 1970s. The system treats high-risk and low-risk effluents and discharges the same way. The Ministry is reviewing its requirements and is considering another model, possibly one that will be risk-based. It said this would make it easier for lower risk operations, such as fish hatcheries, to satisfy Ministry standards.

### Committee Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that:

- 3. The Ministry of the Environment shall report to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on the results of its consideration of a new model for its Certificate of Approval system. The Ministry should specify whether it will introduce a risk-based model to differentiate between high-risk and low-risk effluents and discharges and if so, should also include its criteria for the risk assessment.**

### Agricultural Overflows

The Committee noted that agricultural operations do not have the same overflow option as those discussed above. If a pit is unable to accommodate more effluent, agricultural operations are not able to run excess into a receiving stream. OCWA said that agricultural flows are predictable and would be subject to a different set of standards.

### *Biosolid Testing and Dispersal*

Sewage biosolids can be further processed for use as farmland fertilizer. The Auditor reviewed biosolid handling at a sample of OCWA-operated wastewater facilities. He noted several cases of incomplete biosolid haulage records. The Auditor recommended that OCWA should develop standard policies and procedures to ensure that the amount of biosolid material removed from its

facilities is accurately recorded and applied to land within the amounts specified in the sites' Certificates of Approval.

OCWA said that it has implemented a standard operating procedure across the organization to ensure completion of biosolid haulage records and to ensure that daily and seasonal loads are not exceeded. OCWA is collecting the information, reviewing it, and ensuring that the information travels up through the organization. OCWA is not responsible for monitoring the health and environmental impacts of spreading biosolids on farmland.

The Ministry said that it follows literature on biosolids and is working on a revised regulatory framework on biosolids and other non-agricultural source materials (see supplementary information section below for details). It belongs to the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment's biosolids task group. Pharmaceutical residues in biosolids are an issue of concern and will be a Ministry focus. The Ministry will ensure that its regulatory framework is current and protective; it is also considering increasing standards around application. The Ministry may explore other disposal practices in the future. There is, for example, interest in the use of biosolids as a potential fuel.

### Supplementary Information

In September 2009, the Ministry of the Environment announced that new rules establishing consistent standards and requirements for applying nutrients to farmland are now law. The rules apply to non-agricultural source materials (NASM), which include sewage biosolids. The Ministry said that the rules ensure that NASM applied to Ontario farm land meet strict criteria and are beneficial to the soil. It also said that farmers accepting nutrients, haulers carrying it and those that generate NASM are now regulated by the *Nutrient Management Act* (NMA) or the *Environmental Protection Act* (EPA), not both. This removes an overlapping approval process.

### Regulatory Changes for NASM

The Ministry stated that the new requirements focus on the quality of the material being applied to the land, building on standards that already exist and were part of conditions set out in a Certificate of Approval. The requirements include greater consideration of the material quality and potential odour generation. Changes to strengthen the standards and requirements include the following:

- Requirements that were previously in guidelines are now in regulation.
- Certain standards must be met depending on the concentration of metals, pathogen content and odour potential. If the levels are exceeded, the material cannot be applied to farmland.
- Based on the quality of the material, some applications will be required to prepare a land application plan while others, such as sewage biosolids, will need to have the plan approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. In addition, generators will still need to meet Certificate of Approval requirements for the generation of the material.

Until now, the application of non-agricultural source materials on farm lands was subject to approval under the EPA. This meant that some generators and receivers had to obtain a Certificate of Approval. However, NASM used as a nutrient also required approval under the *Nutrient Management Act*, which required generators to prepare a nutrient management strategy and receivers to prepare a nutrient management plan. The result was an overlapping approval process. Generators of NASM will continue to be regulated under the EPA until the material arrives at the farmer's gate where it becomes subject to Ontario's Nutrient Management Regulation.

### **Committee Recommendation**

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that:

- 4. The Ministry of the Environment, in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, shall provide the Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a status report outlining the process for verifying that those spreading sewage biosolids on farmland are doing so in compliance with amounts specified in Certificates of Approval and/or nutrient management strategies or plans for the sites. The report should specify which Ministry will be responsible for determining the cumulative long-term impact from spreading sewage biosolids on farmland and how this impact will be measured.**

### **Facility Monitoring and Compliance**

The Auditor made a number of recommendations to help ensure OCWA's compliance with environmental, health and safety requirements and to ensure that significant recurring problems identified are promptly corrected. He said, for example, that those facilities rated as the highest risk should be selected for audits and that any noted deficiencies should be ranked/recorded by type and significance to ensure that the most serious problems are dealt with expediently.

OCWA said that it has implemented several proactive systems which exceed regulatory requirements as part of its quality management philosophy. Systems include those related to occupational health and safety, internal compliance audits and facility self-assessments. As recommended by the Auditor, the agency said that it is enhancing reporting with respect to adverse water quality incidents, discharge exceedances, and by-passes to help identify issues it can address or, assist facility owners in addressing.

OCWA said that senior management has approved a new mandate for OCWA's operations and compliance committee. One of the committee's key functions is to analyze trends in performance data and report on opportunities for improvement. Improved reporting mechanisms will ensure that non-compliance items are prioritized and responded to in a timely manner and any required client actions are well documented. Senior management will also be reporting findings to OCWA's board of directors.

## Revenue Generation

### *Full Cost Recovery*

OCWA is to provide services to the water and wastewater sector on a cost-recovery basis. The Auditor noted that OCWA made \$10.6 million over the last 10 years but incurred operations losses for eight of these years, which meant in effect, it subsidized clients for more than \$50 million.

The Ministry expressed satisfaction with the Auditor's comment on OCWA's improved financial performance and noted that Ministry staff are providing OCWA with the necessary support to implement the Auditor's recommendations. OCWA stated that it receives no government funding to subsidize operations and unlike other utilities, does not have a monopoly. It functions as a commercial business, competing for contracts in the open marketplace. Contract and financing revenues are used to recover the costs of service delivery. OCWA said that it is the balancing of its public accountability with a competitive marketplace that makes it a unique Crown agency.

### *Facility Operating Agreements*

OCWA generally has two types of contracts for clients:

- fixed-price: annual price established for the cost of operating a facility including staffing, chemicals, supplies, insurance, and energy costs (price adjusted annually mainly for inflation, flow volume changes, regulatory-related cost changes); and
- cost-plus: cost of operating the client's facility estimated at the start of the year and adjustment made at year-end when actual costs are known.

The Auditor said that OCWA bears the risk in fixed-price contracts; all cost increases are passed onto the client in cost-plus contracts. Most of OCWA's contracts are fixed-price. These carry additional risk related to price increases above the consumer price index for inputs such as labour and chemicals.

OCWA noted that many of its contracts are designed to take flow into consideration. Many of its contracts are also fixed-price, so OCWA said that during years of excessive flows, for example when rainfall is heavy, OCWA and the community will both be affected. Excessive flows would result in additional costs for such factors as chemical, electricity and gas use. This would lead to adjustments and reconciliations in contracts at the end of the year which would mean increased prices for the community.

The Auditor highlighted a number of areas where OCWA's contracting process could be improved to ensure better margins. He recommended, for example, that OCWA should put controls in place regarding pricing decisions and supporting rationale before contracts are approved.



OCWA said that it is continuing to make strides in ensuring financial sustainability regarding contract pricing. Over the past five years it has made progress towards delivering its operational services on a cost recovery basis. It remains committed to achieving this target and is implementing the Auditor General's recommendations to assist with this goal. OCWA's new financial system, which was introduced in June 2007, has enhanced its ability to track, compare and report on the performance of both operations and engineering contracts. OCWA says as it continues to implement business intelligence tools which are available in this new system, it will improve its performance measurement and ultimately, its business activities.

OCWA said it has enhanced its contract documentation control process to ensure that all supporting documentation and the rationale for pricing proposals are retained centrally for regular analysis. It is reviewing its internal pricing methodology and is reinforcing its approval process for negotiating new contract margins.

#### *Project Management Agreements*

OCWA's engineering services contract its professional engineers and project managers to provide a range of services from technical advice to the management of new facility construction projects. OCWA operates the drinking-water and/or wastewater facilities for most of its engineering services' clients.

#### **First Nations Communities**

OCWA said that about 16% of its clients are First Nations communities. It works with 35 band councils providing a variety of services, including oversight, training and expertise. OCWA, as part of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) funding, provides first response for First Nations communities in southern Ontario. (Previously the service was available for all First Nations communities in the province.) First response means that if a First Nations community faces a drinking water or wastewater challenge, the community may call OCWA for certified operator assistance.

OCWA said that it provides a combination of immediate online support and, if required, follow-up support on site for First Nations communities in northern Ontario. OCWA recently won an international award for its Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system which enables the agency to monitor and control facilities remotely. When necessary, OCWA also provides support on site, within 24 hours, by flying into communities. For example, during the severe flooding in Kashechewan, OCWA employees flew there to repair and bring water and wastewater systems back online.

OCWA regularly assists clients in the Safe Water Operations Program. OCWA provides assistance, addresses concerns and trains staff. OCWA belongs to the Dryden First Nations community training centre, providing training for First Nations people who are sent to the centre.

## **Governance, Accountability, and Effectiveness**

### *Governance and Accountability*

The Walkerton inquiry recommended that OCWA be an arm's-length agency with an independent, qualified board responsible for choosing the chief executive. At the time, OCWA's board consisted of deputy ministers from government ministries. The Auditor noted OCWA has been successful in adding well-qualified board members since then; six new independent members have been appointed. He recommended that in order to assist the board in carrying out its oversight responsibilities and to set its corporate direction, OCWA should enhance the reliability and usefulness of its summary reporting to its board.

The Chair of OCWA's board said that the board has directed management regarding the type of information that it requires in order to fulfill its oversight responsibilities. OCWA has begun to implement enhanced internal reporting at several levels within the organization. This includes new mandatory reporting on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis; more comprehensive reporting on compliance, operations, maintenance, training and business activities; improved analysis and highlighting of any systemic issues; and enhanced oversight controls escalation procedures to ensure that required information reaches the appropriate level of the organization.

### *Measuring and Reporting on Effectiveness*

The Auditor said that OCWA has developed a number of good performance measures and has reported on them in publicly available annual reports. He recommended that OCWA should enhance performance measures for its mandate to protect human health and the environment, and consider enhancing its performance measures by focusing more on outcomes than on activities. OCWA said that its board has directed that key environmental compliance metrics such as adverse water quality incidents, bypasses and boil-water advisories, and worker health and safety issues be reported and responded to on a more timely basis.

## **Committee Recommendation**

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that:

- 5. Given the Ontario Clean Water Agency's (OCWA's) stated commitment to improve board oversight and ensure that critical exceedance information related to the management of water and wastewater facilities reaches the board in a more timely fashion, the OCWA board Chair shall advise the Standing Committee on Public Accounts of key changes made to OCWA's governance and reporting practices. The Chair should provide the Committee with an outline of the specific information that is brought to the board's attention, such as drinking water exceedances, and any procedures that have been put in place to address any concerns.**

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## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **The Ministry of the Environment shall report to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on measures that the Ministry is undertaking to share best practices for managing microbiological exceedances at drinking water facilities that are derived from the experiences of both the Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA) and other operators with all drinking water facility operators across the province.**
2. **The Ministry of the Environment make data on bypass, overflow and discharge exceedances publicly available on its website. The Ministry shall provide the Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report specifying how this data will be measured in part, or in total, and how long it will take to post that data on the Ministry website.**
3. **The Ministry of the Environment shall report to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on the results of its consideration of a new model for its Certificate of Approval system. The Ministry should specify whether it will introduce a risk-based model to differentiate between high-risk and low-risk effluents and discharges and if so, should also include its criteria for the risk assessment.**
4. **The Ministry of the Environment, in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, shall provide the Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a status report outlining the process for verifying that those spreading sewage biosolids on farmland are doing so in compliance with amounts specified in Certificates of Approval and/or nutrient management strategies or plans for the sites. The report should specify which Ministry will be responsible for determining the cumulative long-term impact from spreading sewage biosolids on farmland and how this impact will be measured.**
5. **Given the Ontario Clean Water Agency's (OCWA's) stated commitment to improve board oversight and ensure that critical exceedance information related to the management of water and wastewater facilities reaches the board in a more timely fashion, the OCWA board Chair shall advise the Standing Committee on Public Accounts of key changes made to OCWA's governance and reporting practices. The Chair should provide the Committee with an outline of the specific information that is brought to the board's attention, such as drinking water exceedances, and any procedures that have been put in place to address any concerns.**