

## **Too many pollutants finding their way into Canada's drinking water, report calls for national sewer standards**

(Toronto, November 30, 2004) A groundbreaking report released today by the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (CIELAP) calls for a national minimum standard to be applied to all Canadian jurisdictions to limit, restrict and forbid certain pollutants from being discharged into municipal sewers. Although the Walkerton inquiry has paved the way to significantly improved drinking water safety standards in Ontario, nation-wide, insufficient sewage management regulations still prevent the truly effective protection of Canadian water supplies.

Sewage in the form of municipal wastewater is one of the most significant sources of pollution and the largest source, by volume, of effluent discharged into Canadian waters. Laws governing the types and amounts of pollutants that can be discharged into sewers differ greatly across the country, subjecting Canadians to different levels of health risks and sewage treatment and disposal costs depending on where they live.

In its report, researched and written by Lillian Hopkins, CIELAP puts forward eight recommendations for a national sewage management strategy, which include:

- Adoption of a Canada-wide sewer-use bylaw which sets minimum standards
- Adoption of a "user pays" approach for water and wastewater service charges
- Implementation of a volume-based rate-scheme to encourage conservation and "front-of-pipe" preventive technologies.
- Introduction of water rates that better reflect the true cost of water, including treatment, operation and capital costs
- Implementing sewer-use bylaw restrictions which are based on total overall loadings to discourage dilution of wastes
- Requiring all municipalities with municipal sewage treatment plants to implement sewer-use bylaws with numeric limits on restricted (toxic) wastes
- Requiring non-residential sources discharging waste into municipal sewers to implement a pollution-prevention plan
- Phasing out contaminants which cannot be treated properly by sewage plants

"Not only is it important to implement pollution source control strategies across Canada", Says CIELAP Executive Director Anne Mitchell, "it is also important to implement them consistently across jurisdictions. All Canadians have an equal right to safe drinking water, and increased investment in sewerage infrastructure, by federal, provincial and territorial governments, paired with our sewer-use recommendations is required if Canadian waters are to be protected."

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Or visit [www.cielap.org](http://www.cielap.org) to view the complete report.

Founded in 1970, the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy is an independent, not-for-profit research and educational organization whose mission is to provide leadership in the research and development of environmental law and policy that promotes the public interest and sustainability.

*The Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy has for been commenting on and monitoring policy and regulatory changes related to the environment for 30 years.*