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Ontario Conducting Health Hazard Investigation

Province Creates Independent Panel of Scientists to Investigate Water Wells, Fulfilling Commitment

Chatham Kent — Ontario's government for the people has formed an expert independent panel to investigate well water in Chatham Kent, MPP McNaughton announced today.

The five-member independent panel will determine if the water from private wells in Chatham-Kent is safe for consumption.

"Our government made a promise to strike this panel," said McNaughton. "Today we are fulfilling that promise."

The five-member independent panel will consist of four experienced toxicologists and one local geologist. All members are independent from government and are experienced toxicology professionals that have served on advisory committees.

The panel is empowered to take a fresh look at new samples collected from certain water wells in Chatham-Kent where residents have raised questions about water quality. Samples from up to 189 private wells will be taken by a third-party business and tested by a commercial laboratory.

The announcement fulfills a government commitment.

"Barely one year after this promise was made, we are fulfilling it," said McNaughton. "And we're doing it in a way that will inspire confidence from the people of this community. People can trust the results this independent panel delivers."

BACKGROUND

The five independent experts comprising the panel are:

Dr. Keith Benn, PhD – A local geologist and past professor of geology at University of Ottawa.

Dr. Glenn Ferguson, PhD, QPRA – An environmental health scientist with 25 years experience in toxicology, epidemiology, and human health risk assessment.

Dr. Shelley A. Harris, PhD – An epidemiologist and associate professor at University of Toronto who specializes in exposure measurement.

Dr. Ron Brecher, PhD – A specialist in toxicology, risk assessment and risk communication.

Mark Chappel, MSc, DABT – A toxicologist with significant experience in supervising and managing comprehensive toxicity studies.

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“This is welcome news for the people of Chatham-Kent, who raised the effect of wind turbine construction on the water at appeal as a concern,” said Wind Concerns Ontario president Jane Wilson. “That appeal was withdrawn because the proponent sprung a consulting report on the appeal and the Tribunal refused to allow the citizens time to examine it — they were left with no choice, and no chance for real presentation of the issues.”

Wilson, a registered nurse, said she hoped the independent panel of scientists will be free to examine water samples and review the experience of the families’ whose water wells have been affected.

“The response of some authorities, including the local Medical Officer of Health, is that the wells were not of good quality to begin with. That’s absurd and defies belief, when you have dozens of wells fail in a short time,” said Wilson.

Wilson added that the same consultants who claimed there would be no problems in North Kent, were also called upon to refute citizen concerns in North Stormont, where the 100-megawatt Nation Rise wind power project is currently under construction. At appeal, citizens produced experts who said there were problematic turbine locations within the project; the province has designated the entire project area as a “highly vulnerable aquifer

<http://www.windconcernsontario.ca/ontario-to-investigate-link-between-wind-turbines-and-well-water-quality/>