



Office of the Regional Chair
1151 Bronte Road
Oakville ON L6M 3L1

VIA EMAIL

August 27, 2024

The Honourable Sylvia Jones
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2J3

RE: Private Drinking Water Testing in Halton Region

Dear Minister Jones,

On behalf of Halton Regional Council, I am requesting that the Provincial Government continue to provide free private drinking water testing services and reconsider the closure of the Hamilton Public Health Ontario Laboratory.

Private wells are the predominant drinking water source in rural areas and lack the regulatory oversight of municipal drinking water systems. In 2023, it was estimated that there are 5,633 private residential wells in Halton Region. Private drinking water testing for Halton's rural residents is a critical public health resource for private well users to help ensure the safety of their drinking water. Water analysis by licensed laboratories is costly and the discontinuation of free private drinking water testing may result in reduced testing, disproportionately impacting Halton's rural residents, especially vulnerable populations who rely on accessible and reliable water testing services to ensure safe drinking water.

The Hamilton Public Health Ontario Laboratory conducts testing for private drinking water samples as well as testing for diseases of public health significance and the analysis of beach water samples. It is the fourth largest regional laboratory in Ontario and supports six service locations, including the Region of Halton. Closure of the Hamilton Public Health Ontario Laboratory may impact the rapid identification and control of outbreaks of infectious diseases in Halton Region and delay and/or compromise sample analysis and reporting.

Accordingly, at its meeting held July 10, 2024, the Council of the Regional Municipality of Halton adopted the following resolution:

Regional Municipality of Halton

HEAD OFFICE: 1151 Bronte Rd, Oakville, ON L6M 3L1
905-825-6000 | Toll free: 1-866-442-5866

RESOLUTION: Private Drinking Water Testing

1. THAT the Regional Chair write a letter to the Provincial Minister of Health requesting that the Provincial Government continue to provide free private drinking water testing services and reconsider the closure of the Hamilton Public Health Ontario Laboratory as it is an essential part of the public health infrastructure supporting Halton Region.
2. THAT a copy of this resolution be sent to the Premier of Ontario, The Honourable Andrea Khanjin, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Michael Sherar, President & Chief Executive Officer, Public Health Ontario, Halton Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs), Halton's Local Municipalities, Brant County Health Unit, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit, Niagara Region Public Health Department, Hamilton Public Health Services, Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA) and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

The Walkerton Inquiry Report, which was released after the tragic events in Walkerton, Ontario, underscored the importance of robust water quality monitoring and regulatory oversight. Working together, I am hopeful we can continue to ensure safe drinking water for all residents of Halton Region and beyond.

Sincerely,



Gary Carr
Halton Regional Chair

Attachment: Halton Resolution – Private Drinking Water Testing

cc:

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Andrea Khanjin, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Michael Sherar, President & Chief Executive Officer, Public Health Ontario
The Honourable Ted Arnott, MPP, Wellington-Halton Hills
Stephen Crawford, MPP, Oakville
Natalie Pierre, MPP, Burlington,
Effie Triantafilopoulos, MPP, Oakville North-Burlington
Zee Hamid, MPP, Milton
Victoria Tytaneck, Town Clerk, Town of Oakville

Samantha Yew, City Clerk, City of Burlington

Valerie Petryniak, Clerk and Director of Legislative Services, Town of Halton Hills

Meaghen Reid, Director, Legislative and Legal Services/Town Clerk, Town of Milton

Dr. Rebecca Comley, Medical Officer of Health, Brant County Health Unit

Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health and CEO, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph
Public Health

Dr. Malcolm Lock, Medical Officer of Health, Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit

Dr. Azim Kasmani, Medical Officer of Health, Niagara Region Public Health Department

Dr. Elizabeth Richardson, Medical Officer of Health, Hamilton Public Health Services

Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies

Brian Rosborough, Executive Director, Association of Municipalities of Ontario