

Conservation Authorities cash plan

Ontario's Conservation Authorities have offered Premier Bob Rae a plan to save taxpayers an estimated \$100 million a year in local delivery of environmental protection.

"We want the Premier to endorse our initiative and to direct his minister to cooperate with us in this effort," Vicki Barron, ACAO spokesperson said.

Preliminary results of an on-going survey by Conservation Authorities have identified a "tangled maze" of service delivery, duplicated programs, and overlapping jurisdictions among several provincial ministries and Conservation Authorities, which is wasting at least \$100 million annually.

For example, up to 11 different government agencies can now be involved in the review of land development plans. It is estimated that this duplication alone costs taxpayers at least \$16.5 million annually.

It is also estimated that more than \$10.1 million is wasted in duplicated water cleanup programs, \$12.5 million in duplicated soil erosion and storm water management and at

least \$2.5 million in duplicated tree planting.

Recently, the ACAO met with Natural Resources Minister Howard Hampton and delivered their blueprint.

Hampton has asked Conservation Authorities to report back in 30 days with their detailed recommendation for the one window approach to local delivery of environmental protection and natural resource management and ways in which the government could save money.

The Conservation Authorities' blueprint proposes a streamlined one-window approach for the delivery of local environmental protection programs and natural resources management.

The Conservation Authorities' "Blue Print for Success" proposes:

- Environmental protection and natural resources management programs and services be carried out locally by restructured Conservation Authorities on a watershed basis;

- The province should combine the water management-related mandates of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of

Environment and Energy into a single Ministry;

- Provincial Ministries should be responsible for the strategic planning of natural resources management including legislation, regulation, province-wide planning and policy research;

The blueprint is now being circulated to more than 100 environmental groups across Ontario. It has also been submitted to the Ministers of the Environment and Energy, Agriculture and Food and Municipal Affairs for their comments.

"The future of natural resources management in Ontario has reached a crossroads," Barron said. "We can no longer afford to maintain current institutional structures that promote inefficient and ineffective natural resource management program delivery."

Conservation Authorities are community-based environmental protection agencies working in partnership with the provincial government and 497 member municipalities and 11 regional governments across the province to protect local watersheds.

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Mega composter

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is owned by International Process Systems Inc. and has been in use in several American cities for years. It is so effective at turning organic waste into a clean, safe compost that it is being used in some places to compost sewage sludge.

It is not intended to treat sewage sludge in Halton, however.

It is expected to handle 165 tonnes of organic material every day, composting any wood, from brush trimmings to wooden pallets and waste from grocery stores and restaurants.

The entire process, from the dumping of organic waste to the bagging of the finished compost, takes place in a specially ventilated building, so no unpleasant odors escape.

The composting process takes place over a period of 21 days as the material is mechanically turned and moved along special channels. The temperature along each channel is monitored by computer to ensure the material is breaking down. Sampling is done to check that no contaminated materials are in the composter. As well as the composter, the company plans to build a classroom that would be donated for use by university and school students. Plans also call for test garden plots for studying the results of using compost produced from different types of materials.

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