

Proposed environmental Bill has Council concerned

The Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE) threat to strengthen its environmental enforcement by increasing spill penal-

ties, broadening director and officer liability, and making it harder for companies and municipalities to defend charges and

finances has Guelph/Eramosa Township councillors concerned.

The proposed new legislation introduces

Environmental Penalties (EP) that will impose absolute liability on those "responsible for spills that damage the environment

and compromise the health of Ontarians."

Public Works Manager Larry Van Wyck brought the issue to council's attention to a paragraph from a Municipal/ Corporate report from environmental lawyers Willms & Shier which read:

"The potential liability of directors and officers will be expanded, and the burden of proving due diligence is shifted, under both the EPA and the OWRA. Currently, a director or officer of a company has a duty to take reasonable care to prevent any unlawful discharge. Bill 133 extends the due diligence duty to prevent any branch of the Act, regulations, or any approvals, permits or orders. When charged, a director or officer will have the onus of proving that he or she took "all reasonable care" to prevent the contravention."

"We should be concerned," Van Wyck told council at their meeting on Monday, December 6 Councillors concurred.

"It will be difficult to find people to serve (on these boards). "Cr. Chris White said especially when those charged will have the onus on proving that they took all reasonable care to prevent the contravention. The proposed new legislation is the direct result of

events in Walkerton.

It will stir things up all over," said Councillor Les Foote.

"We need an impact assessment on what it really means," White said, "we could do all that's possible and still go to jail."

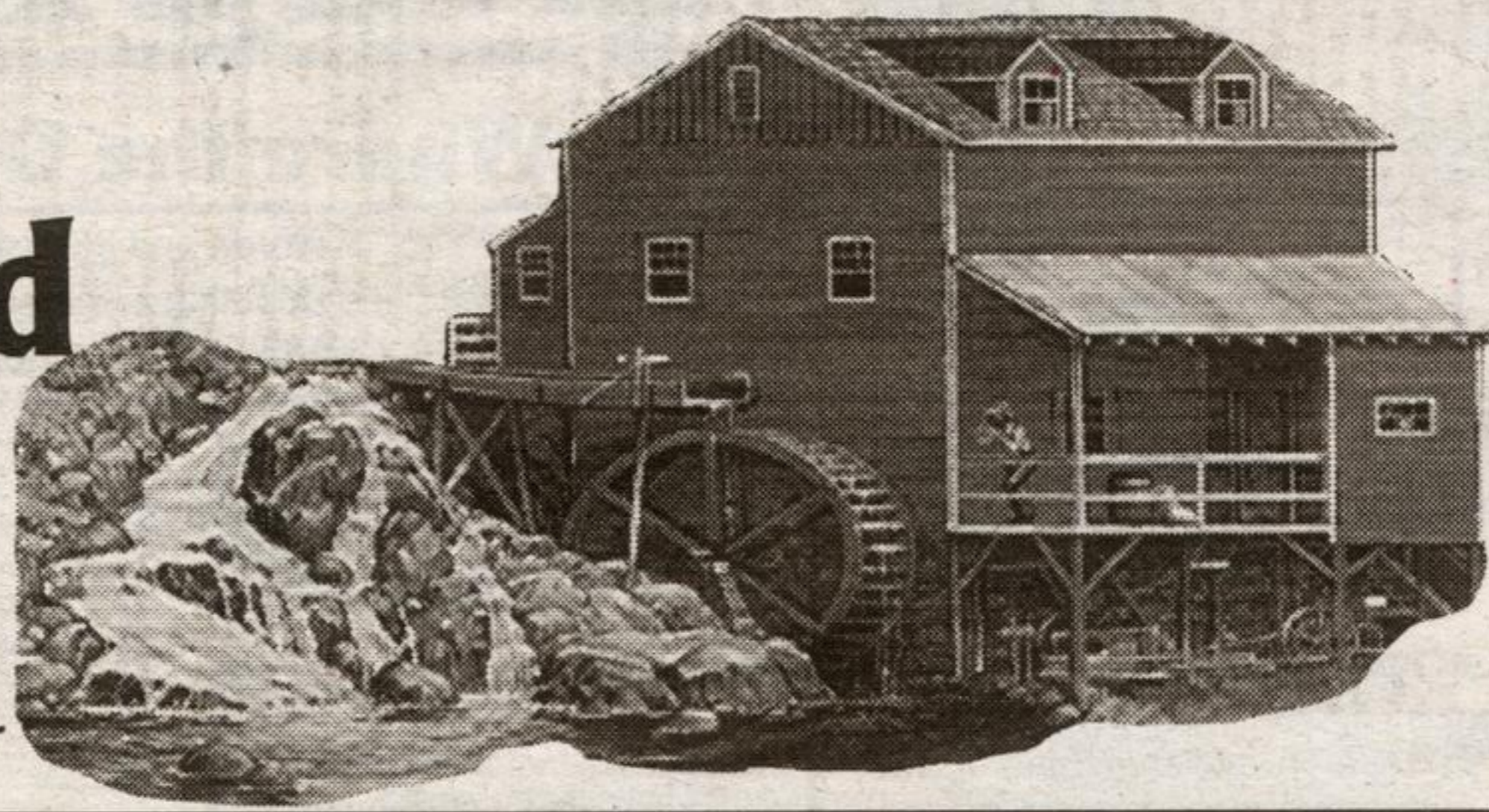
Premier Dalton McGuinty insists that Bill 133 would ensure polluters immediately face consequences for their actions. An EP and associated order could be imposed by a Ministry official within days of a spill.

"Our message to polluters is simple," says McGuinty, "You spill, you pay."

The objective is to encourage companies "to make greater efforts in preventing spills and (to provide) additional incentives to clean them up quickly."

According to Willms & Shier Bill 133 would put polluters on the hook for Eps of up to \$100,000 per day, even if they "took all reasonable steps to prevent the contravention and even if, at the time of the contravention the person had an honest and reasonable belief in a mistaken set of facts that, if true, would have rendered the contravention innocent." Due diligence would not be a defense - spillers would be liable.

The Rockwood MULLER



CHRISTMAS JOY: The newly elected executive of Rockwood Eramosa Firefighters Association had hardly let the ink dry on their commitment to the community when they started a drive for toys, food and money for the EWAG office to distribute to the needy this Christmas. Left to right are association Treasurer Stew Rockola, President Bernie Liebzig, Gillian Riseborough of EWAG and Vice President Gillese Alarie show some of the toys and food donated to the cause. Secretary Lisa Stover is missing.

Hydro One spells out changes in township's hydro pole agreement

Guelph/Eramosa Township Council authorized Mayor Clint Martin and Clerk Janice Sheppard enter into a new lease with Hydro One for network hydro poles Monday night. The agreement has several changes including these sent to the clerk:

Hydro One Networks will no longer permit banners or strings of lights to be extended from pole to pole, as has typically been done across roads and main streets. Pole-to-pole banners, even those with wind vents, create transverse forces on our distribution poles, most of which are not guyed to withstand this additional stress. Moreover, pole-to-pole banners can become detached and entangled in overhead power lines, causing a power interruption for local residents and businesses. Hydro One is also concerned that banners across roadways

have the potential to come down into traffic and cause a safety hazard for motorists.

We understand that across-the-road banners have been a long-standing practice and that many communities and service clubs have invested in banners to promote local events. Municipalities may continue hanging across-the-road banners by installing their own separate poles with the appropriate back-guying in a location that will not interfere with overhead wires.

The pole rental fee for streetlight attachments on Hydro One Networks poles will remain at \$0.17 per attachment per month, or \$2.04 per attachment per year. Hydro One Networks is reviewing this fee, as it is significantly lower than the fee currently being charged by other distribution companies in Ontario.

The lower portion of Hydro One's poles will continue to be offered to municipalities at no charge for community use and beautification, subject to Hydro One Networks' approval and the existence of a signed agreement. Any community group that approaches Hydro One Networks directly about the use of our poles will be asked to seek the municipality's approval.

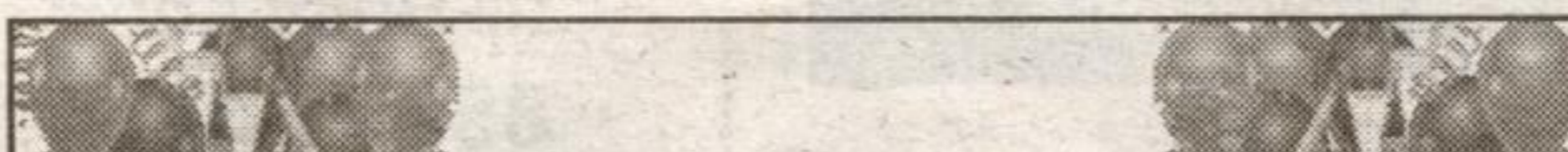
Municipalities that wish to put up seasonal decorative lighting or lit decorations on Hydro One Network' poles will be required to have proper electrical receptacles on the poles. A qualified electrical contractor may install the receptacles in locations approved by Hydro One Networks and the installation must be inspected by the Electrical Safety Authority.

Don't call police for road weather status

Wellington OPP are asking the public to refrain from calling Police Communication Centres to find out the latest in road and weather conditions.

"Every snowy day the Centres are inundated with calls from people and it clearly isn't the responsibility of dispatchers, "the OPP maintain. "More importantly it could put someone else's life at risk if they can't get through to a dispatcher for a real emergency."

Instead of phoning the police, the public can get winter road and weather conditions by phoning 1-800-265-5407 or check the web at www.ontarioweather.com/winter/roads/ontario.asp.


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*Featuring: Marion's Country Band
Dinner, Dance, Party Favours*
Rockmosa Community Centre
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OPEN HOUSE**
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9am-2pm
*Pet Pictures with Santa
Nails, Ears and Anals Day*
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From All the Staff at R.V.C.*