

The Corporation of the Township of Bonnechere Valley

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May 15, 2024

Re: Phase out of water well testing

At its regular council meeting of May 7, 2024, the Council of the Township of Bonnechere Valley reviewed correspondence on

This letter is to advise that Council voted in support of this correspondence with the following resolution:

*24.071 MOVED BY **John Epps**
 Tracey Sanderson*

WHEREAS the 2023 Auditor General's Value-for-Money Audit of Public Health Ontario (PHO) release in December 2023, recommendation number 5 states that PHO, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health (MOH), are to update and implement a laboratory moderation plan within 12 months to streamline the laboratory's operations;

AND WHEREAS this stemmed from a 2017 proposal by PHO, collaboratively with the MOH at the request of the Deputy Minister to close six of the 11 public health laboratory sites and gradually discontinue private drinking water testing to mitigate the rising costs of maintaining facilities, establish a more efficient operating model and reduce the rerouting of samples to other PHO laboratory sites;

AND WHEREAS Private drinking water systems in Ontario do not have the legislated safeguards that are required for municipal/communal/public systems under the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002;

AND WHEREAS when water is monitored regularly, there is no way to know the true quality of the water, which puts people at increased risk of becoming ill;

AND WHEREAS the private drinking water test data maintained by PHO has been used by researchers to publish evidence that helps support public health policy;

AND WHEREAS in the Walkerton Inquiry Report Part 2, Justice O'Connor concluded the privatization of laboratory testing of drinking water samples connected directly to the E. coli O157:H7 outbreak in Walkerton Ontario in May 2000;

AND WHEREAS the proposed removal of PHO's free private drinking water testing is of concern for all of the above because even though well owners understand the

importance of testing their well water the inconvenience and cost of doing so is a barrier;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Township of Bonnechere Valley direct a letter to Minister Lisa Thompson requesting that the province not proceed with the recommended phase-out of free private well testing in Ontario;

And Further That area municipalities, the Minister of Environment Conservation and Parks, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, other Source Protection Committees, and local health units be forwarded a copy of the letter and asked for their support.

Carried

I trust you will find this satisfactory, but if you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact the undersigned.

Yours truly,

Annette Gilchrist, CMO., AOMC
CAO/Clerk/Treasurer
Township of Bonnechere Valley

cc.