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ONTARIO INVITES PUBLIC COMMENTS ON DRAFT AGREEMENTS TO PROTECT GREAT LAKES WATERS

Province Negotiating With Great Lakes Bordering Jurisdictions: Quebec and Eight States

TORONTO — The Ontario Government is working to ensure negotiations to protect the Great Lakes will strengthen controls on water uses in the Great Lakes Basin, Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay announced today.

"Ontario needs to be part of these negotiations to achieve the best possible protections basin-wide," said Ramsay. "The Great Lakes are a shared resource. By having a voice at the table we can ensure Ontarians' interests are reflected in the final agreements."

The Ontario government supports the general intent of the draft agreements with Quebec and the eight Great Lakes states. The draft agreements include the establishment of a minimum environmental standard for regulating water uses across the basin. There is currently no such standard. The standard would significantly strengthen the control of water uses in many of the Great Lakes states and involve the public and Aboriginal communities in future decisions about water use. Ontario will continue to prohibit water transfers out of the province's three major water basins.

Public meetings have already taken place in Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Toronto, Windsor and London. Input received from citizens will help Ontario continue its leadership role as the negotiations progress. "We are pleased by the number of responses so far," said Ramsay. "We want to remind citizens that we will continue to welcome their comments until October 18."

The province is holding another public meeting in Kingston on September 28 from 7 to 9 p.m., as well as meetings with Aboriginal communities and stakeholders on the draft agreements. An overview of the draft agreements will be presented at the meetings, and attendees will be invited to comment and ask questions. Citizens may also forward comments by e-mail to greatlakesannex@mnr.gov.on.ca, through the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry, or by mail. Mailing details and the meeting location are available at <http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/mnr/water/greatlakes/index.html>.

"The waters of the Great Lakes Basin are a precious natural resource, vital to the environment and prosperity of the region," said Ramsay. "Our goal is to protect that resource to ensure future generations can enjoy the Great Lakes."

Fact Sheet: [NEGOTIATING THE CHARTER ANNEX IMPLEMENTING AGREEMENTS TO PROTECT GREAT LAKES WATERS](#)