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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Thursday, August 13, 2009

Coalition Urges Ontarians to Support Development of a World-Class Water Strategy

Today, a coalition of water professionals, university think-tanks, environmental and citizen-based groups called on government to take immediate and aggressive action on water conservation. *H2Ontario: A Blueprint for a Comprehensive Water Conservation Strategy* outlines a strategy for making Ontario world-leaders in cutting wasteful water practices, and urges Ontarians to support development of a world-class action plan.

The blueprint coincides with the release of a government white paper outlining options for a new water strategy. Peer reviewed by the country's leading water experts, *H2Ontario* sets a course for the development of a progressive and pragmatic plan.

"We commend the Premier of Ontario for identifying the importance of conserving water. Investing in water efficiency and conservation will protect freshwater ecosystems, foster new innovative industries and save energy all at a fraction of the cost of expanding water infrastructure," said Carol Maas, author of the report and Innovation and Technology Director for the POLIS Water Sustainability Project. Maas also points to recent research that identifies water conservation as the next frontier of municipal energy and greenhouse gas emission savings. A province-wide increase in water efficiency of 20% over the next 20 years could save enough pumping, treatment and heating energy to power 90% of the homes in the City of Toronto.

As signatories to a key regional agreement, all ten Great Lakes states and provinces have committed to taking action on water conservation, a crucial step to protecting and restoring the Great Lakes.

"This strategy has the potential to put Ontario well ahead of the pack and set a positive precedent for the rest of the Great Lakes basin," said John Jackson of Great Lakes United. "It would be a huge opportunity missed if Ontario did not establish a strong action plan."

"A commitment to water conservation would also spur job growth in a broad range of industries such as plumbing, landscaping, engineering, construction and design, and in manufacturing sectors involved in supplying everything from rain barrels to dishwashers," said Mary Ann Dickinson, Executive Director of the Alliance for Water Efficiency.

The Blueprint establishes a coherent strategy organized around 10 priority actions and 25 specific recommendations. Priority actions include encouraging the province to:

- **Recognize conservation as the best form of new infrastructure** – by requiring water conservation plans and providing infrastructure funds for conservation.
- **Price it right** – by encouraging volume based pricing.
- **Support innovation** – through pilot programs, education, and incentives for commercialization of new water efficient practices and technologies.
- **Promote efficient fixtures** – by banning 13 litre toilets and other inefficient fixtures.

The report urges the Province to act on this plan, and to instill a culture of water conservation within Ontario. "We all have a role to play in recognizing the importance of water, and we encourage Ontarians to ensure that the province implements a world-class strategy," says Maas.



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The government white paper, entitled “Stewardship, Leadership, Accountability: Safeguarding and Sustaining Ontario’s Water Resources for Future Generations.” was posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry and is open for public comment until October 4, 2009.

Download the Report:

H2Ontario: A Blueprint for a Comprehensive Water Conservation and Efficiency Strategy is available at <http://www.poliswaterproject.org/publication/262>.

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