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September 27, 2006

The Honourable Laurel Broten
Minister of the Environment
12th Floor, 135 St. Clair Avenue West
Toronto, Ontario M4V1P5

Subject: Request for review of Ontario Drinking-water Quality Standard for Tritium

Dear Ms. Broten:

At the present time, the Government of Ontario is developing Ontario's energy strategy and has expressed its intention to rely on nuclear energy. Therefore, it is timely to ensure that drinking water standards for tritium and other radionuclides are protective of health.

On behalf of Toronto City Council and the Toronto Board of Health, I am requesting that the Government of Ontario review the Ontario Drinking-Water Quality Standards for tritium and other radionuclides. Specifically, the City of Toronto asks the Province of Ontario to adopt more health-protective standards, and to give further consideration and weight to the 1994 recommendations of the Ontario Advisory Committee on Environmental Standards (ACES). City Council's decision on this issue is attached for your reference.

The current Ontario Drinking-water Quality Standard for tritium is 7,000 becquerels per litre (bq/L), (O. Reg. 169/03, as amended to O. Reg. 248/06). The 1994 ACES report recommended immediate adoption of a 100 bq/L standard, reduced to 20 bq/L within five years. Had Ontario adopted these recommendations, the standard would already be at the more protective level of 20 bq/L.

I look forward to further discussion on this matter.

Sincerely,

David McKeown, MDCM, MHSc, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health

Attach: Decision by Toronto City Council at its meeting June 27, 28 and 29, 2006

Cc: The Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier
The Honourable Dwight Duncan, Minister of Energy
The Honourable George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Chair and Members, Toronto Board of Health
Ruth Grier, Co-Chair, Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition, Occupational and Environmental
Carcinogens Working Group