



**Ashbridges Bay Treatment Plant (ABTP)
Neighbourhood Liaison Committee (Meeting #91)**

&

**ABTP Implementation and Compliance Monitoring Committee (ICMC)
(Meeting #70)**

Ralph Thornton Centre, 765 Queen St. E.
Thursday, November 6, 2008
6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Michael Rosenberg	Economics of Technology Working Group
Karen Buck	Citizens for a Safe Environment, NLC Co-Chair
Lois James	Scarborough Resident
Jim Neff	Citizens for a Safe Environment
Karey Shinn	NLC Co-Chair, Safe Sewage Committee
Dalton C. Shipway	Friends of the Lower Donlands, Task-Force to Bring Back the Don
Steven Whyte	ICMC, Resident of South Riverdale
William Sheehan	Citizen
David Done	Beaches Resident, Safe Sewage Committee

City of Toronto:

Shabbir Datto	ABTP Engineer, Toronto Water
Nancy Fleming	Senior Engineer, Toronto Water
Scott Wilton	ABTP Engineer, Toronto Water
Robert Davis	Supervisor, Public Consultation Unit
Mike Logan	Public Consultation Unit

Other:

Jean-Yves Urbain	EarthTech (AECOM)
Jean-Louis Gaudet	LURA Consulting

Regrets:

Bob Kortright	Toronto Field Naturalists
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1. Welcome and Introductions

Karey Shinn brought the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

NLC Portion of the Meeting

2. Review and Approval of ABTP NLC Minutes

- **Meeting #89, July 8, 2008**

David Done asked that his name be corrected: David Done, Beaches resident and Safe Sewage Committee.

Karey Shinn told members that they could contact her regarding any additional changes to the minutes.

The minutes were adopted.

- **Meeting #90, September 24, 2008**

Mike Logan indicated that the following name can be corrected: Mary Ann Atell, Safe Sewage Committee and Resident

The minutes were adopted.

Karen Buck also moved to amend the previously-approved minutes from Meeting #88. Page four: 'industrial purposes' should be changed to 'non-agricultural purposes.' This change was accepted by the committee.

3. Review of NLC Action Items & Motions

Meeting #83 Action Item #4:

***Karey Shinn** to send Motion #1 to Lou Di Gironimo, CC'ed to the Public Works & Infrastructure Committee (PW & I) members.*

Meeting #83 Motion #1

***Michael Rosenberg** moved that the NLC request:*

- a) That the City not give approval to Veolia to use any thermal process, as agreed to in the Mediation Agreement.*
- b) If the City intends to ignore our request, that the NLC and the community be informed at least 6 months before any permission is given to Veolia to use a thermal process.*

Karey Shinn said she was not sure what happened to this motion. We have not heard back from Lou Di Gironimo. **Karen Buck** agreed that we do not know what happens when a motion is sent to someone. **Robert Davis** said that it goes to his office. **Jim Neff** suggested that future motions should also include a reply date to increase the likelihood of a timely reply. **Karey Shinn** suggested that this motion be re-issued with a date request in advance of the next meeting. **Michael Rosenberg** suggested that this letter be sent as a 'copy.' **Jim Neff** suggested setting a reply deadline so that there is some time before the next meeting date. **Dalton Shipway** said that it would be helpful to find out who receives motions regarding the NLC and direct communications to that individual. **Karey Shinn** asked who we should address communications to. **Mike Logan** said that he would find out who it should be directed to.

Action Item #1: **Karey Shinn** to re-send the following motion:

Meeting #83 Action Item #4: ***Karey Shinn** to send Motion #1 to Lou Di Gironimo, CC'ed to the Public Works & Infrastructure Committee (PW & I) members.*

Meeting #83 Motion #1

***Michael Rosenberg** moved that the NLC request:*

- a) That the City not give approval to Veolia to use any thermal process, as agreed to in the Mediation Agreement.
- b) If the City intends to ignore our request, that the NLC and the community be informed at least 6 months before any permission is given to Veolia to use a thermal process.

And, **Mike Logan** to find out who, within Lou Di Gironimo's office, the motion should be sent to.

Disposition: Completed

Meeting #86: Action Item #3

***Robert Davis** to look into establishing a process for tracking motions.*

Mike Logan said that he spoke with Robert Davis and Nancy Martin regarding this issue. **Robert Davis** said they will continue to discuss it to find a solution.

Disposition: Ongoing

Meeting #88: Action Item #2

***Karen Buck/Karey Shinn** to write a letter on behalf of the NLC to Toronto Water requesting a response on all pending Motions*

Disposition: Ongoing.

Meeting #88: Action Item #7

***Robert Davis** to inquire as to whether the odour response protocol is a service that 311 will provide and how they plan on addressing odour complaints.*

Mike Logan said, according to 311, once 311 is operational, it will be handling odour complaints. He said that he requested further information on what the protocol will be. He will update the committee as more information becomes available. **Karen Buck** that there needs to be further discussion regarding the follow-up process after an odour complaint is made. The complaint can be written down, but it also needs to be verified. Based on past experience, it is important to follow up quickly on odour complaints. **Shabbir Datto** said that if anyone had ideas regarding odour complaints that they could put together a document and submit it to us and we can respond. **Karey Shinn** said that we had a protocol for the plant before 311. This older document would be a good starting point. **Dalton Shipway** suggested that 311 have a separate category for odour complaints. Referrals should be made to an odour action line. **Robert Davis** said that 311 wants a referral service that is traceable. They want to trace calls back and find out that the issue has been resolved. In the meantime, Toronto Water will have to make sure all complaints are responded to accordingly. **Karen Buck** said that Access Toronto is working towards a "one step" next call. We could call into Access Toronto and see what happens in terms of protocol. **William Sheehan** asked when 311 will be introduced. **Robert Davis** said it is planned for Fall 2009. It will be introduced in phases over 16 months.

William Sheehan asked about the status of the odour committee. **Karen Buck** said this committee ceased to exist once Harbour Remediation and Transfer shut down as it was the biosolids odour complaint committee. This committee made up of staff and community members used to meet to discuss odour issues practically as they arose. The committee would also meet with Harbour Remediation and Transfer to suggest operating solutions. At the end, the final solution was that the Harbour Remediation and Transfer program was shut down because it could not meet the 'fence line' odour regulations of the Ministry of the Environment.

William Sheehan asked if the odour situation has improved or worsened. **Karen Buck** said that it is different. Now it is the plant that is creating odours as opposed to the satellite plant. The odours are not as pervasive as from the Harbour Remediation and Transfer. The current odour is just annoying.

Action item #2: **Mike Logan** to ask 311 to clarify what the protocol is for odour complaints and continue to ask for monthly updates until the protocol is in place.

Jim Neff said that before the 311 protocol is implemented there should be an active interim protocol. **William Sheehan** said that the City should establish a goal to eliminate all odours within 24 hours of receiving a complaint. **Karey Shinn** asked if this was possible. She indicated that we can look to the 311 protocol and the original odour protocol regarding timelines to address odours. **William Sheehan** noted that it is important to get back to the caller and let them know what happened after their call. We should check to see that this is included in their protocol. There should also be timelines to indicate how quickly an odour issue will be resolved. If the timelines change the original caller should be informed. **Robert Davis** said that 311 is a massive undertaking and we may not hear back from them until next summer. We should not expect an immediate response.

Action Item #3: **NLC** to review original odour protocol and 311 odour protocol (when available) to ensure that a) there is a timeline (preferably within 24 hours) to eliminate odours after a complaint is made; and b) the caller is informed of what happened following their complaint.

Karen Buck said that the way things get done is usually political. The more complaints there are about odour, the greater likelihood it will be a priority of Toronto Water. **Karey Shinn** asked if Mike Logan could look into the minutes from three to four years ago for the original odour protocol. **Mike Logan** replied yes.

Action Item #4: **Mike Logan** to circulate the odour protocol the NLC worked on 3-4 years ago.

Disposition: Completed (See new Action Items Above)

Meeting #88: Action Item #10

***Karey Shinn and Karen Buck** to send Meeting #88, Motion #1 to **Lou Di Gironimo** and Waterfront Toronto.*

Meeting #88 Motion #1

***Michael Rosenberg** moved:*

The NLC recommends that since the existing landscaping plan south of Lakeshore includes footpaths on Plant property, we request that Toronto Water inform Waterfront Toronto that the inclusion of footpaths on the Plant property would be acceptable in the Lake Ontario Parks Plan. Toronto Water should also inform Waterfront Toronto that the intention of the landscaping plan was that footpaths on the Plant property were acceptable but that the land involved may need to be reclaimed for Plant operations at some point in the future.

Disposition: Ongoing

Meeting #89: Action Item #4

***Michael Rosenberg** to draft a letter to Waterfront Toronto regarding the lack of immediate action regarding footpaths and specifying that the Toronto Water plan has not been cancelled.*

Karey Shinn said nothing has been sent yet as she was waiting for Michael Rosenberg to prepare a letter. **Michael Rosenberg** said he would prepare a letter for Toronto Water and a separate letter for Waterfront Toronto. **Karey Shinn** asked if Waterfront Toronto has met. **Michael Rosenberg** said he was unsure.

Disposition: Ongoing

Meeting #89: Action Item #5

***Shabbir Datoo** to find out if the design-build contract with Veolia specified completion dates and financial penalties for not meeting timelines or completion.*

Shabbir Datto said that the construction contract is backed by a performance bond. Beyond that he has been advised that it is not appropriate to discuss the City's legal position with respect to Veolia and/or the Bond within a public forum. **Michael Rosenberg** said it does not appear that they understood that all we wanted to know was if there was a timeframe. We did not want information on whether or not they met the timeframe.

Disposition: Completed.

Meeting #89: Action Item #6 – Karey Shinn and Karen Buck to send Meeting #89, Motion #1 to Lou Di Gironimo

Meeting #89 Motion #1

David Done moved that:

Whereas in our opinion, the advisory committee that Toronto Water has set up has bypassed the genuine intent of the EA approval conditions. Therefore, we resolve that Toronto Water allow the ABTP NLC to have two representatives on the advisory committee to augment the membership of the EA advisory committee. And, all meetings of the advisory committee should be public.

Mike Logan explained that this action item has been marked "N/A" because Toronto Water is no longer setting up an advisory committee. The change of plans regarding the advisory committee in this case seems to satisfy the spirit of the action item.

Karen Buck said the NLC should write a letter to the Ministry to notify them that an EA advisory committee will not be set up by the City. The members of the committee agreed.

Action Item #5: NLC to write a letter to the Ministry of the Environment to notify them that an EA advisory committee will not be set up by the City.

Meeting #90: Action Item #1

Dalton Shipway to contact John D. Minor and ask him to share written information regarding the Carlaw and Lakeshore site. (Karey Shinn attempted to contact Mr. Minor and was unsuccessful.)

Dalton Shipway said that we need to formally request that John D. Minor make a presentation and get permission from his superior to come. He is in the planning department and Barbara Leonhardt, his superior, could expedite matters if the request was made to her. **Steven Whyte** suggested that the chief planner, Gary Wright, is also cc-ed. **Karen Buck** said there is a consultant carrying out soil sampling at the pumping station site and we want to know what types of remediation have been requested and which have been successful in the past. We need to know how that site can be remediated before it is developed.

Motion #1: **Steven Whyte** moved: Contact Barbara Leonhardt to formally invite John D. Minor and ask him to make a presentation and share written information regarding soil and groundwater remediation for the Carlaw and Lakeshore hydro site. And, if it is applicable, also explain how this would apply to the successful remediation of the pumping site or Ashbridges Bay. Chief Planner, Gary Wright, should also be cc-ed. **Dalton Shipway** seconded.

Action Item #6: NLC to contact Barbara Leonhardt (and copy Gary Wright) to formally invite John D. Minor and ask him to make a presentation and share written information regarding soil and groundwater remediation for the Carlaw and Lakeshore hydro site. And, if it is applicable, also explain how this would apply to the successful remediation of the pumping site or Ashbridges Bay.

Disposition: Completed.

Meeting #90: Action Item #2

Karey Shinn to try to get copy of the Veolia agreement to share with William Sheehan.

Karey Shinn provided William Sheehan with a copy of the agreement. **William Sheehan** said that the agreement does not contain the information regarding their market. The pellet marketing agreement, referred to on page 4 of the agreement, should identify a detailed estimate of the markets. They are supposed to be submitted every year 30 days before contract renewal. He wants to know where the Pellet Marketing Agreement is.

Michael Rosenberg asked how much of the Design-Build contract is available to the public. **Shabbir Dattoo** said he would find this out.

ICMC Action Item #1: Shabbir Dattoo to find out how much of the Veolia contract is available to the public

Disposition: Completed.

Meeting #90: Action Item #3

Shabbir Dattoo to provide information on natural gas usage so that Karey Shinn can calculate cost savings.

Shabbir Dattoo provided the following numbers for natural gas consumption:

2003: 5,879,000 m³
2004: 3,214,000 m³
2005: 3,768,000 m³
2006: 11,148,000 m³
2007: 6,741,000 m³

Karey Shinn asked why it went down in 2007. **Shabbir Dattoo** said that was the year when the hot water boilers were put back in service. **Karey Shinn** said she also needs the digester gas numbers. **Shabbir Dattoo** provided the following estimates for digester gas consumption:

2003 – 2006 (per year): 28,908,000 m³
2007: 31,536,000 m³

Karey Shinn asked what the value of digester gas is per cubic metre, and if the use of digester gas is as efficient as the use of natural gas. **Jean-Yves Urbain** said that in his experience, the use of digester gas is about 60% as efficient as the use of natural gas.

Disposition: Completed.

4. Mini-updates

- **Odour Control Project**

Shabbir Dattoo said there has been no change in status. They are still waiting for approvals from the Ministry. **Karey Shinn** asked if something could happen in the winter if approvals came in then. **Shabbir Dattoo** said that once we get approval, we can move ahead with Tendering.

- **Landscaping Plan**

Shabbir Dattoo said the Project is still proceeding with the Phase 1 ESA (Environmental Site Assessment)

Karey Shinn asked if the meeting date is the same. **Mike Logan** said that it will not be in November, but he will let people know the new date. **Dalton Shipway** said that the Annual General Meeting of Waterfront Toronto was held last week and the chair and dignitaries were proud that they initiated a Master Plan for soil and groundwater. He suggested that the NLC should play a role in this and that the NLC contact Suzanne Barrett as she could help the Committee find out about the Master Plan process. **Dalton Shipway** shared Suzanne Barrett's contact information with Karey Shinn.

Action Item #7: **Karey Shinn** to find out about the Master Plan from Waterfront Toronto for soil and groundwater by asking Suzanne Barrett.

- **EA**

Shabbir Dattoo said that the Disinfection RFP was closing on November 13, and that LURA Consulting was the successful proponent for the Public Consultation portion of the implementation of the EA undertaking. LURA would be presenting at tonight's ICMC meeting to introduce themselves and get feedback for the Public Consultation Plan they are working on.

- **Biosolids**

Shabbir Dattoo said that the City is working on updating the decision-making model, the management options and plant process memos.

Karey Shinn asked if there is there a report you can give us on the biosolids program for the summer. **Shabbir Dattoo** said that this information would be in the 2008 annual report that would come out around March/April 2009. **William Sheehan** asked if this was pertaining to the NDP calling for a moratorium on biosolids, like in Quebec. **Karey Shinn** replied no.

- **Pelletizer**

Shabbir Dattoo indicated that the Pelletizer is in the middle of secondary testing, which commenced on October 7. **Karey Shinn** asked how it is going so far. **Shabbir Dattoo** said it is still too early to tell.

Karen Buck asked if the record of flows to the plant and bypasses and the quantity/quality of the effluent could be added to the meeting mini updates. **Shabbir Dattoo** said that this rollout is typically done yearly and it would not be possible to do it more frequently. **Nancy Fleming** said the disinfection RFP presented at the last ICMC meeting had these numbers for the past 7 years and that these numbers moving forward are reported in the plant's annual reports. These annual reports are made available to the public in the Urban Affairs library in Metro Hall. **Karey Shinn** asked for a copy of the bypass information contained in the EA Undertaking RFP for the next meeting.

Action Item #8: **Nancy Fleming** to provide a copy of the bypass information made available in the disinfection RFP.

Karey Shinn asked if it would be possible for this to be reported annually. **Shabbir Dattoo** indicated that reporting is already done on an annual basis, and is within the annual report, which comes out in March/April every year.

5. Other Business

William Sheehan pointed out that the NDP recently spoke out in the Ontario Legislature against the land application of biosolids. **Dalton Shipway** shared an article on this topic. The article is appended to the minutes.

William Sheehan suggested that this meant that the ICMC and Toronto should start considering alternatives to land application. **Jim Neff** replied that the ICMC was always open to alternatives. **Michael Rosenberg** agreed that ICMC had always been open to alternatives. William asked Michael what alternatives to land application he thought were acceptable. Michael said he could not think of any alternatives right now.

Steering Committee

1. Feedback on proposed consultation and communication plan

Toronto Water has hired LURA Consulting for the public consultation component of the EA Undertaking. **Jean-Louis Gaudet** is here representing LURA. Sally Leppard, founder, and David Dilks, President, will also be involved in this project and will be providing facilitation for the Steering Committee meetings. The purpose of Jean-Louis's attendance tonight is to get some initial input on the consultation plan. **Jean-Louis** circulated a form to ask for initial input from committee members. The plan was for a consultation and communication plan to be drafted based on members' comments and discussed at a working session in January, 2009.

Karey Shinn was concerned that the form is general and the projects involve different consultation approaches, issues and audiences. For example, the pumping station is close to a neighbourhood, the outfall is far away and in Federal water, and disinfection is an on-site issue.

Jim Neff asked if there is a reference for what the 'approved undertaking' means generally. This could be confusing for people. He said that he wants a definition of the undertakings and the principles involved sent out before the meeting. **Jean-Louis** said that this sort of feedback is helpful. In developing a plan, we need to make sure that the language used is accessible.

Michael Rosenberg asked what aspects of the projects the public would be consulted about. He also wondered how frequently public consultation meetings would be and what the topics of the meetings would be. He thought that the consultation should be in a public meeting format and not an open house.

Karen Buck asked if the City provided LURA with the EA and mediation agreement. **Jean-Louis** said yes, we have received and are aware of your role. The EA and the mediation agreement were part of the RFP. Karen Buck asked how the RFP fits in with the EA approval. She asked if a public consultation would be done during the implementation of the disinfection. **Jean-Louis** replied yes.

Karen Buck said that in order to talk about consultation and communication, you need to have a meeting where we can get together and have a consensus on certain aspects as opposed to individual feedback forms. Otherwise, the responses will be all over the map and you will pick up on what you want from our comments. It won't be a consensus of the NLC. It is not good enough to just hold an open house, you must have a public session where everyone gets to hear what the concerns are and what the responses are. **Nancy Fleming** said that this form is just a first step. Its intention is to provide a place for members to brainstorm their ideas so LURA can take these back and work on a draft outline to bring forward to the Committee to build on during their next meeting.

Dalton Shipway said that we want to be consulted first. We want to be an advisory body and not circumvented. **Jean-Louis** said he was hearing that this committee would rather do this initial phase as a group.

William Sheehan said that you cannot invite the public in and indicate what the City plans to do. This brings the purpose of public consultation into question.

Michael Rosenberg said you have gone ahead with the UV RFP. However, the original process was the OWRA studies and then detailed design. He wondered how long that process would take. **Nancy Fleming** said that the disinfection study will take 6 to 9 months and once that is complete and disinfection and outfall pre-design and detailed design will take two to three years.

Michael Rosenberg said suppose for the purposes of the secondary bypass that the best approach is filtering followed by UV. He wondered if this would be considered to be a disinfection option or is the filtering something different, e.g., tertiary treatment. **Nancy Fleming** said that the successful proponent will look at all disinfection options currently available for secondary effluent and bypass.

Karen Buck said that the City did not apply to have filtering done and that concerns me; it is not a part of the EA approval. **Nancy Fleming** said she could not speak to that.

Karen Buck said the public consultant was hired without our knowledge. **Nancy Fleming** said that was due to internal staffing levels and to ensure the implementation of the EA undertaking was not delayed, they had to hire external facilitation and public consultation assistance. The ICMC Steering Committee was presented the next steps of the implementation of the EA undertaking at their July meeting which outlined the hiring of an external public consultation consultant. **Mike Logan** said the comment was noted.

Steven Whyte said it is important to educate the public on very technical issues so they can understand options and detect problems with designs –to environment or individuals. In the past, however, staff had complained that too much time and money was spent educating the public. We appreciate staff and consultants spending a little more time explaining technical matters regarding treatment options to the public.

Jim Neff said that he did not appreciate this as it is the third or fourth meeting in a row where the agenda has been hijacked. **Mike Logan** pointed out that this discussion was on the agenda distributed to committee members.

Motion # 2 **Karen Buck** moved: Convene a meeting to discuss the public consultation plan in January, without filling out the forms and sending them in.

Karey Shinn seconded. All voted in favour less **Jim Neff** and **Steven Whyte** who abstained.

ICMC Portion of the Meeting

1. Review and Approval of ICMC Minutes

- **Meeting #65, October 23, 2007**
- **Meeting #67, June 3, 2008**
- **Meeting # 68, July 8, 2008**
- **Meeting #69, September 24, 2008**

Deferred to next meeting.

2. Review of ICMC Action Items & Motions

Deferred to next meeting.

3. Discussion of NLC/ICMC/Steering Committee format

Mike Logan shared a potential schedule for the NLC, ICMC presentations and ICMC meetings in 2009.

Michael Rosenberg said there have been too few meetings per committee. There are at least six presentations we need in 2009. There is the possibility of ICMC meetings being combined with presentations. We could have at least 15 meetings throughout the year with 5 of each category. **Mike Logan** said that it is the intent that some ICMC presentations could be done during meetings identified as Steering Committee meetings on the schedule.

Michael Rosenberg said he could accept the schedule if there was a minimum of five NLC meetings and a minimum of five regular ICMC meetings, although some of those could be combined with project Steering Committee meetings.

Jim Neff said that ICMC annual report goes to the Works Committee in compliance with mediation terms. It takes about two meetings to put it together.

Mike Logan said instead of preparing the ICMC report during ICMC regular meetings that it could be prepared outside of these meetings. The City could provide needed supports.

Karen Buck noted that this year is different because the report must go to the Ministry of the Environment by March 31, 2009. And, that report is part of the compliance of the City to the conditions of the EA approval, so March becomes very critical. The RFP and public consultation dates should be included on the schedule. She thought that it did not appear that there were enough meetings on the proposed schedule.

Mike Logan said that the timelines for carrying out technical work are not established yet which is why they are not included.

Michael Rosenberg said that there needs to be sufficient time for presentations in the next year. Presentations are needed on planning, economic issues, optimization, and water efficiency plans. **Steven Whyte** also suggested flow projections and asked that these be part of planning.

4. Status of ICMC Annual Report

Jim Neff and **Karey Shinn** indicated that they thought the ICMC needed to meet before January to prepare the report.

Mike Logan provided the following two support options for the committee to consider:

1. Meeting space at Metro Hall (weekdays, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm), with laptop computer and projector and screen provided if necessary.
2. Typing and formatting of report from submitted notes. Final changes/formats based on mark-up provided by ICMC.

The group discussed and decided that option 1 met their needs. **Mike Logan** will book a room all day for Thursday December 4 to prepare the report. Michael Rosenberg and Steven Whyte will be there to transcribe.

5. Next meeting & Adjournment

The next ICMC meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, January 13, 2008. The meeting will be devoted to the Steering Committee working with LURA Consulting on the Public Consultation Plan for the EA Undertaking.



AARON HARRIS/TORONTO STAR FILE PHOTO

Harry Burma throws sludge pellets on his crop of soybeans at his farm near Watford, Ont. in July. The pellets are made from the "biosolids" left at the end of the sewage treatment process.

MPP warns of farm sludge 'crisis'

Fears pellets used on fields cause health risks

CAROLA VYHNAK
URBAN AFFAIRS REPORTER

Spreading industrial, commercial and human waste as fertilizer on farmland will spark the next public health crisis, the NDP warns.

Calling for an immediate moratorium on the practice, MPP France Gélinas said too little is known about the effects of sewage sludge on human health and food.

Sludge is the solid waste left at the end of sewage treatment. Close to half of the province's sludge — also called biosolids — is given free to farmers in a 30-year-old practice the government says is safe.

"There are too many unanswered questions about the human health effects of sludge to allow this practice to continue," the NDP's health critic said at a Queen's Park press conference yesterday.

Each year, 120,000 tonnes of the

nutrient-rich black goo are spread on 15,000 hectares of the province's farmland. But there is no monitoring of sludge-related health concerns and no proof it's safe, said Gélinas, MPP for Nickel Belt.

"The possibility of a public health crisis is too real and present to be ignored," she said in an interview. "This is the next public health crisis that is looming."

Gélinas said her call to halt spreading "until we know it's safe" is backed by environmentalists, farmers, researchers and activists.

Wendy Deavitt told reporters her family has been plagued with "diarrhea, bladder infections, nausea — the list goes on" since a neighbour in Trent Hills sludged his property two years ago. Deavitt, whose horses, dogs and cats have also become ill, said her hobby farm is now "worthless."

Rejecting the idea of a moratorium, Agriculture Minister Leona Dombrowsky insisted the government takes the management of bio-

solids "very seriously."

Her ministry and the ministry of the environment have reviewed the practice and are revising existing regulations, "taking a science-based approach" that includes input from the public, she said.

Asked if she could guarantee public health was not at risk because of sludge on farmland, Dombrowsky said she isn't a scientist.

"But it's my understanding there has not been a link between the practice of spreading biosolids and human health."

Despite health complaints like Deavitt's, the government has failed to address sludge issues, said leading researcher Maureen Reilly, who heads the environmental group SludgeWatch.

Though there have been no links between biosolids and E. coli, salmonella or listeria infection, in light of recent outbreaks, Reilly said, "It makes no sense to continue applying sewer wastes on our farmland."

< HEALTH

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negs.