



## ANNUAL REPORT

*April 2009 – March 2010*

### MUNICIPAL/PROVINCIAL JOINT ADVISORY GROUP on Water & Wastewater Management in Nova Scotia

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#### **Background**

The intent of this Municipal/Provincial Joint Advisory Group (M/P JAG) is to ensure that key issues of importance facing Nova Scotia municipalities regarding water and wastewater management are brought forward during the development and implementation of the following two strategies:

- Water Resource Management Strategy for Nova Scotia
- Canada-wide Strategy for the Management of Municipal Wastewater Effluent (MWWE)

Originally formed in 2005, the M/P JAG focussed solely on the MWWE strategy development. A determination was made to broaden the mandate of the group to include water management initiatives and a renewed Terms of Reference (attached) was signed in September 2008. An 'Annual Report' is required under the Terms of Reference.

#### **Advisory Group Structure**

As municipalities are the key stakeholders in many environmental initiatives undertaken in the province, and in some cases significant investment may be required in order to implement programs, it is important to ensure effective communication opportunity exists with the two levels of government - municipal and provincial. The collaborative representation (membership list attached) on the Joint Advisory Group includes members from:

- Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM)
- Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS)
- Province of Nova Scotia represented by:
  - Nova Scotia Environment (NSE)
  - Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR)

## **Meetings Held**

The M/P JAG 'Terms of Reference' indicates a requirement to meet on a quarterly basis, or as mutually agreed upon. For the term of this report, three meetings were held on the following dates:

- April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009
- September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009
- February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010

## **Key Topics Discussed**

The key topics discussed by the M/P JAG in the past year include the following:

- Provincial Water Strategy
  - Goals, tasks and timelines
  - Stakeholder consultation sessions
  - Key linkages with other provincial and federal departments, related topics (i.e.: Coastal Action Plan; Wetlands Policy), and other key stakeholders
  - Communication with municipal planners
  - Presentation updates at municipal-related conferences
- MWWE Strategy
  - Goals, timelines and strategy implementation requirements, issues and concerns
  - Initial risk ranking meetings with municipalities
  - Wastewater regulations under the federal Fisheries Act
  - Infrastructure funding opportunities and limitations
- Revised Provincial Drinking Water Treatment Standards
  - Identified the need for proposed revisions and the timelines for the public comment period
- Infrastructure Funding
  - Current funding mechanisms accessible to address municipal upgrade requirements
  - Budgetary concerns and limitations related to funding programs

## **Key Deliverables**

A main focus of the M/P JAG is to provide communication linkages and mechanisms between the municipal units and the province. The regular M/P JAG meetings and newsletters provide for this regarding the municipal political and administrative communication. However, it has been deemed critical to ensure that opportunity should be taken to communicate with municipal technical and operations staff.

- Sharing minutes with another key stakeholder group that includes technical representatives from the Municipal Public Works Association of Nova Scotia (MPWANS)
- Providing water and wastewater related presentations and updates as required to meetings and conferences of UNSM, AMANS, and MPWANS and with industry associations –

Atlantic Canada Water & Wastewater Association (ACWWA) and Maritime Provinces Water & Wastewater Association (MPWWA). Presentations were made during the report period for the following:

- Municipal meetings for MWWE Initial Risk Ranking, (province-wide) August-October, 2009;
- ACWWA (Halifax), October 2009
- MPWANS (Wolfville), October 2009
- UNSM (Halifax), November 2009
- The Editorial Board released the 2<sup>nd</sup> newsletter produced by the current M/P JAG in February 2010 and posted on associated websites. There were three newsletters produced by the previous M/P JAG and are also available online.

### **Summary**

There are regular discussions regarding the value and effectiveness of the M/P JAG. There is a consensus that the meetings and other communication opportunities and exchanges play an important role in municipal/provincial collaboration, specific to water and wastewater issues. The meetings are well attended, open and balanced discussions are held, and there is a high level of mutual respect for the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of government and the need to continue to work together to protect human health and the environment.



**TERMS OF REFERENCE**  
**MUNICIPAL/PROVINCIAL JOINT ADVISORY GROUP**  
**on**  
**Water & Wastewater Management in Nova Scotia**

Nova Scotia Environment (NSE) promotes the protection and responsible management of Nova Scotia's water resources. Municipalities also play an important role in the overall protection and management of water and wastewater systems, and water resources. They manage the day-to-day operation and monitoring of the water and wastewater treatment systems; they are also key in protecting potable watersheds, protecting and conserving wetlands, and the sustainable use and development of coastal areas in the province.

Effective communication and contribution from stakeholders and partners will be key in the development of water resource management initiatives in the province. Two important water-related initiatives currently underway include a comprehensive *Water Resource Management Strategy for Nova Scotia*; and a *Canada-wide Strategy for the Management of Municipal Wastewater Effluent (MWWWE)*. Municipalities have a considerable stake in the development of these initiatives that match to municipal priorities, and NSE recognizes that municipalities need to be fully engaged in the development and implementation of these strategies. To effectively facilitate municipal input to these strategies, NSE has created a Municipal/Provincial Joint Advisory Group comprising of representatives from the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM), the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS), and the Province of Nova Scotia.

**Intent and Mandate:**

The intent of this Municipal/Provincial Joint Advisory Group will be to ensure that key issues of importance facing Nova Scotia municipalities regarding water and wastewater management are brought forward during the development and implementation of the above mentioned strategies. The Joint Advisory Group will provide opportunity to effectively discuss critical issues and concerns to Nova Scotia municipalities, and to work together to ensure they are addressed. The Joint Advisory Group may also consider other relevant aspects of municipal/provincial water resource activities, as referred to the Joint Advisory Group, with the agreement of the UNSM and AMANS Executives and the Minister.

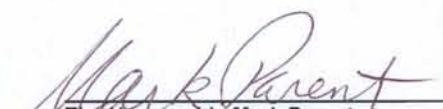
The collaborative effort between the Province and the municipal sector is intended to improve the manner in which water-related policies and programs are developed and implemented in the Province. The creation of the Joint Advisory Group will formalize a process for municipal input.

Chaired by NSE, the Joint Advisory Group will meet on a quarterly basis, or as mutually agreed upon between the parties, to discuss matters of importance and relevance to the two strategies. An annual report will be submitted to the UNSM and AMANS Presidents and the Minister of Environment.

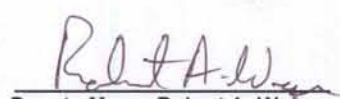
The Municipal/Provincial Joint Advisory Group will remain in effect for three (3) years. A review will be undertaken in the final year of the mandate whereupon a determination will be made regarding dissolution or extension of the group.

**Composition:**

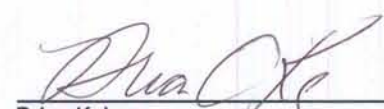
It is agreed that the Municipal/Provincial Joint Advisory Group will comprise of no more than three (3) members from the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, three (3) members from the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia, and four (4) members from the Province of Nova Scotia.



The Honourable Mark Parent  
Minister of Environment



Deputy Mayor Robert A. Wrye  
President, UNSM



Brian Keizer  
President, AMANS

**Dated: September 19, 2008**



**Municipal/Provincial Joint Advisory Group  
on Water and Wastewater Management in Nova Scotia**

18 December 2009

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