December 18, 2007

His Worship Fred Eisenberger
Mayor
City of Hamilton
71 Main Street West
Hamilton ON L8P 4Y5

Dear Mayor Eisenberger:

Thank you for your letter of October 11, 2007 to Ms. Laurel Broten, the former Minister of the Environment, regarding Hamilton’s Lead Service Extension Replacement Program (LSERP) initiative.

As Minister of the Environment, I assure you that the Government of Ontario is committed to ensuring that drinking water in Ontario remains safe and clean.

Your LSERP initiative is an innovative approach to promoting lead line replacement for homeowners. This initiative is consistent with other municipal best practices outlined in the Ministry of the Environment’s Financial Plans Guideline for municipal drinking water and wastewater systems. While at this time, there are no specific provincial funding programs to assist with lead line replacement programs for private property owners, there are a number of provincial programs that provide significant support for municipal water and wastewater infrastructure, including:

- almost $380 million through the Canada-Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (COMRIF);
- $56-million through the Rural Infrastructure Investment Initiative (RIII), which municipalities can use to upgrade their water and wastewater systems; and
- since 2003, $1.2 billion in long-term financing for water and wastewater projects through the Infrastructure Ontario’s Ontario Strategic Infrastructure Financing Authority (OSIFA) loan.
I also want to point out that under the leadership of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, the province is currently negotiating with the federal government to ensure that adequate resources from the federal Building Canada Fund will be invested in water and wastewater systems. The province will be relying on the expertise and knowledge of the municipal sector through consulting with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario in an effort to build programs which suit their needs.

Thank you, again, for sharing this proposal with the ministry.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John Gerretsen
Minister