

## **ABSTRACT**

### **A Capacity Assessment and Legislative Review of the Clean Water Act in Ontario: Past, Present and Future**

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Historically an unequal distribution of capacity existed among local Municipalities and Conservation Authorities with regards to protecting water in Ontario, as well there was no specific legislation pertaining solely to source water protection. The aim of this research project is to present and analyze through a comparative assessment, the financial capacity requirements and the technical, institutional, social and political capacity progress observed among the 19 Source Protection Regions across Ontario in terms of protecting source water following the Walkerton event and the enactment of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

The results indicate that through the enactment of the CWA, capacity building initiatives have taken place through a top-down model with the provincial governments' guidance, direction and support to local municipalities and CAs. When the provincial government takes control and provides capacity related assistance, the lower level municipal and CA governments become regulated; functioning more effectively and with a level of consistency across the province.