

MEDIA RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES RECEIVE FUNDING TO PROTECT DRINKING WATER

NEWMARKET, November 17, 2004 – Conservation Ontario applauded the Provincial government’s announcement today to provide \$13 million to assist Conservation Authorities and their partners to protect drinking water in Ontario.

“The government’s announcement is very welcome and encouraging,” said Peter Krause, Chair of Conservation Ontario, representing Ontario’s 36 Conservation Authorities.”

The Minister of the Environment Leona Dombrowsky and the Minister of Natural Resources David Ramsay jointly announced that the government is providing funding for source protection planning for all watersheds in the province. Just over \$10 million will be directed to Conservation Authorities to prepare for this planning effort and develop water budgets that will identify the availability and use of water on a watershed basis.

“Pulling together existing data and undertaking preliminary technical studies is necessary for future decisions about water in Ontario,” said Krause. “The government’s funding will enable this work to move ahead quickly”.

Conservation Authorities are local watershed management agencies that work in partnership with municipalities and other levels of government to plan and carry out natural resource programs and services. Since the Walkerton Inquiry in 2001, Conservation Authorities have been advocating source protection planning and implementation in the province as a critical component in protecting drinking water and ensuring public health.

“It makes good fiscal and environmental sense to protect sources of drinking water in our watersheds,” said Krause. “This includes lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater sources. While many of us have access to drinking water from municipal systems, treating this water is more expensive than protecting it in the first place.”

Protecting drinking water at their sources is particularly critical to the almost 2 million people who draw their drinking water, untreated, from these various sources.

Conservation Authorities have a proven track record of successfully managing water quality and quantity in their watersheds. They will work with all levels of government, First Nations and various stakeholders in the development of source protection plans.

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Conservation Ontario represents Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities

Leaders in Watershed Management

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