

THE WALKERTON INQUIRY

The Honourable Dennis R. O'Connor, Commissioner

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MEDIA RELEASE, APRIL 2, 2001

WALKERTON INQUIRY TO HOLD TOWN HALL MEETING IN NORTH BAY ON TUESDAY, MAY 1, 2001

TORONTO – The Walkerton Inquiry will hold a town hall meeting in North Bay on Tuesday, May 1, 2001. The meeting will hear presentations from organizations and individuals relating to the safety of drinking water in the area.

The meeting is one in a series in cities and towns across the province during the spring and summer. The first was held in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo on Thursday, March 22, 2001. Transcripts of the session are available on the Inquiry's web page www.walkertoninquiry.com. The next one is scheduled for Peterborough on April 10. Other communities where meetings are planned include Windsor (June 12), Thunder Bay (July 10), Kingston, Toronto, and Ottawa.

The North Bay meeting will be held in the City Council Chamber in the North Bay City Hall, 200 McIntyre Street East, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. The meeting will be televised on Cogeco Community Television.

The purpose of the town hall meetings is to give Commissioner Dennis R. O'Connor an opportunity to hear concerns about drinking water from a broad spectrum of the Ontario public.

"We want as diverse a range of views and options as possible so when it comes time to draw up recommendations, I'd like to be confident that there is no serious school of thought or view that has not been tapped," Commissioner O'Connor said.

The meetings will focus on local and regional perspectives relating to drinking water. Those interested in participating should plan to attend the meeting scheduled in their nearest regional centre.

The meetings will provide a forum for members of the public who would not otherwise have the opportunity to speak directly to the Commissioner. Organizations and individuals who have standing at the Inquiry do not need to make a presentation at the meetings.

Organizations and individuals interested in making a presentation at the Peterborough meeting should provide a request in writing, outlining the subject and a short summary of the presentation, **by Friday, April 20**. Oral presentations will be limited to 15 minutes.

Requests should be sent to::

The Walkerton Inquiry
c/o Town Hall Meetings
P.O. Box 789, 220 Trillium Court
Walkerton, Ontario
N0G 2V0

Time will be reserved at the meeting for comments or questions by persons who did not provide a written request to present. Preference in scheduling will be given to those who provide a written request in advance.

Those unable to attend, may provide comments in writing. All written submissions will be read and carefully considered by Commission staff, and will form part of the public record of the Inquiry.

The Walkerton Inquiry is an independent Commission established on June 12, 2000 by the Government of Ontario under the Public Inquiries Act. The Commission's mandate is to examine the cause of contamination of the water supply in Walkerton, Ontario, by E.coli bacteria, and to make recommendations to ensure the safety of drinking water in Ontario. Seven people died as a result of the contamination and 2,300 became ill.

The Inquiry's formal hearings began in Walkerton on October 16, 2000. They are scheduled to resume on April 12.

The Commissioner's findings, conclusions and recommendations will be delivered to the Attorney General of Ontario who will make them public. He aims to deliver his final report by the end of the year.

More information is available on the Inquiry's website at www.walkertoninquiry.com.

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