



Elgin Area

Primary Water Supply System

Contaminants Not In Drinking Water

FOR IMMEDIATELY RELEASE

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Recent articles in the London Free Press and area Sun Media newspapers have raised some questions regarding the quality of treated drinking water from the Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System. The articles refer to a “toxic plume” that extends from the Port Stanley harbour into Lake Erie, impacting the water intake for the Elgin Area water treatment plant, some 4.5km east of Port Stanley harbour, which supplies area municipalities including south-London. The Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System would like to take this opportunity to reassure the public that treatment at the water treatment plant is effective at dealing with contaminants in raw water. The Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System continues to provide treated drinking water of a greater quality than the minimum standards required by the Province of Ontario.

The compounds mentioned in these articles are not detected in the treated drinking water supplied from this facility.

The article specifically refers to contaminants known as polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) which are found in coal tar. PAHs do not mix easily with water and are bound to sediment and suspended particles emanating from Kettle Creek. Sediment is effectively and easily removed through the conventional drinking water treatment process and the water treatment plant is fully capable of removing contaminants. Contaminants are not found in the raw water itself, nor are they detected in treated drinking water supplied to the area municipalities.

Water quality sampling in recent years has confirmed that treated drinking water quality has not been impacted. Under the *Safe Drinking Water Act*, municipal residential drinking water systems are required to test for a wide variety of organic and inorganic parameters. Testing conducted for this facility (<http://www.watersupply.london.ca/reports.html>) has confirmed that levels of arsenic, mercury, PCBs, benzo(a)pyrene, benzene, toluene and selenium were undetectable in the treated drinking water supplied to area municipalities.

The Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System started investigating the drinking water intake and potential impacts in 2000 as it was suspected that the intake was being impacted by silt from the lake bed. The conclusion at that time was that lake bed bathymetry (underwater topography of the lake bottom) around the intake was nearly identical to what it has been since the 1960's. Further studies confirmed that Kettle Creek was the primary source of silt for the intake. These studies have confirmed that there is a plume of silt, largely during storm events, originating from Kettle Creek and Port Stanley harbour and although much of the silt had contaminants bound to it, there were no contaminants in the water itself.

As required by the *Clean Water Act*, the Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System is finalizing the source water protection technical assessment reports. The report has identified Kettle Creek as a known potential source of contamination. For this reason Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System actively participates on the Lake Erie Source Protection Committee and the development of the Lake Erie Source Water Protection. In addition, the Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System has maintained a partnership with the Kettle Creek Conservation Authority to address risk mitigation and source protection measures.

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