



Canadian Fuels
ASSOCIATION
canadienne des carburants

Ontario Division
1000-275 Slater St.
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1P 5H9
t. 613.232.3709
canadianfuels.ca

February 3, 2026

Permissions Modernization Team
Client Services and Permissions Branch
Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks
135 St. Clair Avenue West - Floor 1
Toronto, ON
M4V 1P5

Re: ERO #025-1361 Proposal to Exempt Certain Low-Risk Activities from Environmental Permissions

Dear MECP Permissions Modernization Team,

On behalf of Canadian Fuels Association (CFA) and our member companies¹ we thank the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) for the opportunity to provide feedback on the *Proposal to Exempt Certain Low-Risk Activities from Environmental Permissions*.

CFA represents producers, distributors, and marketers of Canada's transportation fuels, including gasoline, diesel, ethanol, bio-based diesel, jet fuel, specialty fuels, and lubricants. The sector employs approximately 115,000 Canadians, producing about 110 billion litres of refined petroleum products and more than 5 billion litres of biofuels each year. It also operates 80 distribution terminals and supplies over 11,500 retail and commercial sites nationwide. CFA members are responsible for virtually the entire supply of Canada's petroleum products and nearly 80% of its biofuels, operating 16 refineries and 15 facilities that produce biofuels from coast to coast.

CFA supports the MECP's initiative to modernize Ontario's environmental permissions framework by exempting activities that present minimal risk to human health and the environment. Regulatory systems are most effective when oversight is proportional to risk, predictable for proponents, and focused on outcomes rather than process. In this regard, the MECP's proposal represents a positive step toward directing regulatory attention where it delivers the greatest public benefit.

Many of the activities identified for exemption are inherently low risk, routinely governed by established engineering standards, municipal requirements, or other regulatory regimes, and rarely require MECP

¹ Canadian Fuels members: Braya Renewable Fuels, Cenovus Energy, Federated Co-operatives Limited, Greenenergy, Greenfield Global, Imperial Oil Limited, Irving Oil, Norcan Petroleum Products GP, North Atlantic, North West Redwater Partnership, Petro-Canada Lubricants Inc., Shell Canada Limited, Suncor Energy Products Partnership, Sunoco LP, Tidewater Midstream and Infrastructure Ltd. and Valero Energy Inc.

involvement to achieve improved environmental outcomes. Aligning approval requirements with actual risk enhances regulatory credibility and allows ministry resources to be concentrated on higher-risk or more complex activities.

For fuel producers, environmental approvals are often integrated into long-term capital planning and infrastructure investment cycles. Redundant or low-value approvals for minor or low-risk modifications can delay equipment replacement, system upgrades, and the adoption of more efficient or lower-emission technologies. Reducing unnecessary approvals for these activities supports timely investment, strengthens operational resilience, and reinforces Ontario's competitiveness as a jurisdiction for advanced manufacturing—all while maintaining strong environmental protections.

Sewage and Stormwater Works (Ontario Regulation 525/98)

CFA supports the proposed exemptions for sewage and stormwater works that pose limited environmental risk, particularly where works are temporary, connected to construction activities, or discharge exclusively to municipal sewer systems. In these situations, risks are already addressed through municipal oversight, existing approvals, and established design and operational practices.

Use of Qualified Professional Verification

CFA supports the ministry's consideration of qualified professional verification as a tool to provide assurance for exempted activities, provided that the approach remains proportionate and efficient. Verification requirements should be clearly defined, avoid duplicating ministry review, and rely on existing professional accountability mechanisms. Where internal staff meet the same professional qualifications as third-party practitioners, they should be permitted to complete and sign required documentation. When applied appropriately, this approach can maintain confidence in system performance while preserving the efficiency benefits of exemption.

Conveyance of Effluent for Further Treatment

CFA recommends clarifying or expanding the proposed exemption for sewage works that do not discharge to the natural environment to explicitly include works that convey effluent to another facility for treatment under an existing Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA).

Within the fuels sector, it is common for wastewater generated at one facility to be transferred to a centralized or third-party treatment system that holds responsibility for final treatment and discharge. In these cases, environmental risk is managed at the treatment and discharge location, not at the point of generation. Requiring multiple ECAs for the same effluent stream can create duplicative oversight, particularly when upstream operational changes trigger amendments at more than one facility.

Air and Noise Emissions (Ontario Regulation 524/98)

CFA supports the proposed exemptions for air and noise emissions associated with clearly defined, low-emission equipment and activities. Applying technology-based and performance-based criteria helps ensure exemptions remain targeted to genuinely low-risk sources while maintaining appropriate oversight of manufacturing processes with greater potential impacts.

Temporary Equipment Used During Severe Weather Events

CFA encourages the ministry to consider extending air and noise exemptions to temporary equipment deployed in response to significant weather events, such as extreme rainfall or flooding. Industrial facilities increasingly rely on temporary pumping or similar equipment to manage stormwater, prevent flooding, and avoid uncontrolled releases during severe weather. These measures are preventative in nature and reduce environmental risk.

Although current regulations include exemptions for emergency equipment, uncertainty around what constitutes an “emergency” can create compliance ambiguity. Equipment used proactively in anticipation of severe weather may not clearly fall within existing definitions, despite serving an environmental protection function.

Waste Management (Ontario Regulation 347)

CFA supports the proposed exemptions for small-scale community composting and biogas upgrading activities, which advance waste diversion, renewable energy generation, and broader sustainability objectives. Clear operating conditions associated with these exemptions will be important to ensure continued environmental and safety performance without introducing unnecessary administrative burden.

Water Taking and Transfer (Ontario Regulation 387/04)

CFA supports the proposed clarification and expansion of exemptions related to foundation drainage systems and dewatering activities within cofferdams where water takings are limited in scale, duration, and environmental impact. Clear and consistent exemptions reduce uncertainty during construction and maintenance activities and help avoid delays that offer little environmental or public health benefit.

Transition and Implementation

CFA supports the proposed transition provisions allowing proponents to seek revocation of existing environmental permissions for activities that become exempt. To support effective implementation, the ministry should provide clear guidance on revocation processes and ensure requests are processed in a timely and predictable manner.

The proposed changes are expected to reduce compliance costs and administrative burden by eliminating unnecessary approvals and registrations for low-risk activities. For industrial operators, even

incremental efficiencies can generate meaningful benefits when applied across multiple facilities over time, supporting continued growth and investment in Ontario.

CFA supports the ministry's proposal as a constructive move towards a more modern, efficient, and risk-based environmental permissions system. With appropriate safeguards, professional accountability, and clear guidance, the proposed exemptions can reduce unnecessary red tape, improve system resilience, and allow regulatory resources to be focused where they provide the greatest environmental and public health benefit. CFA looks forward to continued engagement with the ministry as these changes are finalized and implemented.

CFA thanks you again for this opportunity to provide feedback on this important consultation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Tresise', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Landon Tresise
Director, Government and Stakeholder Relations
Canadian Fuels Association
landontresise@canadianfuels.ca