

April 28, 2026

Province of Ontario – Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

**Re: Consultation on communal drinking water and wastewater system municipal consent requirements
ERO 026-0302**

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) posting 026-0302, seeking feedback on proposed amendments to the *Municipal Act, 2001* and *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002*, to enable regulations to set out requirements for municipal consent of non-municipal communal drinking water and wastewater systems, and to require municipalities to consent if requirements are met. The intent of these changes is to encourage greater adoption of non-municipal communal water and wastewater systems to support new housing development.

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) understands that the intent of the proposed legislative changes and future regulations is to facilitate needed housing development by supporting the use of alternative water and wastewater systems. Non-municipal communal water and wastewater systems create various opportunities and challenges for the school board in relation to both existing and future school sites, and so the board would like to provide comments from the perspective of providing appropriate public school accommodation.

SCDSB planning staff respectfully recommend that the future related regulation(s) include the connection of existing public service facilities, such as schools, in proximity to the proposed development as a condition of municipal consent. Connecting existing schools that are currently privately serviced to communal or public servicing is a major priority for the board. When a school is privately serviced, its population is limited by the Ministry of Environment's Reasonable Land Use Policy. New communal servicing is generally proposed as part of development applications that will result in pupil growth, which is why the board then acts to secure connection to the communal system in order to expand the ability to service the new pupil growth. Thus, connecting existing school sites to communal servicing generally increases the number of pupils the school can accommodate, which optimizes the use of the school and reduces the board's overall land needs.

The SCDSB also recommends that the proposed regulation(s) include a condition, applicable to all developments proposing new communal servicing or connecting to existing communal servicing in proximity to future school site(s), that a servicing agreement be entered into with the applicable school board, where required by the board. The servicing agreement shall allocate water and/or wastewater servicing for the school site(s), to the satisfaction of the school board. The SCDSB has encountered situations where the private owner of a communal system has been


reluctant to provide the board with servicing allocation and has asked the board to justify the school site servicing allocation. As communities build out and grow, and the SCDSB proceeds through the capital priorities funding process with the Ministry of Education, the board should not have to justify the need for servicing allocation for a school site to a private developer. A servicing agreement clause would ensure the board has predictable and timely access to the needed servicing allocation where and when it is needed.

It is important to note that under the OBC, school servicing has its own allocation calculation that differs from the calculation for residential dwellings. The residential equivalency is nominal. When communal servicing is proposed and a new school site is required or an existing rural school will support the development, the school should be considered an as-of-right use that does not require a monetary contribution to the construction of the communal servicing system. The capacity for the school should be built into the design of the servicing system from the beginning in order to support the creation of a complete community.

With the Province's stated goal to construct 1.5 million new homes by 2031 comes the need to ensure Public Service Facilities, such as schools, are sufficient to meet the needs of the residents of these new homes. The Simcoe County District School Board is understanding of the government's proposals to facilitate the provision of alternative methods for water and wastewater servicing. Non-municipal communal water and wastewater servicing systems create different challenges for the SCDSB and so board needs need to be considered to ensure growth can be accommodated and quality education is accessible for every student.

Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Sincerely,



Kristen Bartmann, MPLAN
Planner
Simcoe County District School Board

Cc:

County of Simcoe
Nathan Westendorp, Director of Planning/Chief Planner

Ministry of Education, Government of Ontario
Catherine Roy, Senior Policy Analyst

Simcoe County District School Board
Corry Van Nispen, Superintendent of Business and Facility Services
Andrew Keuken, Senior Manager of Planning, Enrolment, and Community Use
Sandy Clee, Assistant Manager of Accommodation & Planning
Katie Kirton, Assistant Manager of Planning & Property