



Municipality of South Bruce

MUNICIPAL OFFICE

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September 25, 2023

Via Email

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Dear Sir and Madams,

Re: Ontario Association of Sewage Industry Services (OASIS)

Please be advised that the Municipality of South Bruce Council met at their regular session of Council on September 12, 2023, at which time it heard from the Ontario Association of Sewage Industry Services (OASIS) as a delegate.

In response to the delegation, the following motion was passed:

Motion M23-570

Moved by: Ron Schnurr

Seconded by: Mike McDonagh

THAT Council instructs staff to forward a copy of this presentation along with the formal letter submitted by OASIS to be sent to all levels of Municipal Governments across the Province including but not limited to the various Provincial Ministries, including the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks and The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and all other relevant parties;

AND FURTHER THAT OASIS be involved in discussions and communications pertaining to the discussed issue to help provide recommendations and solutions to help mitigate the issues surrounding approved disposal sites;

AND FURTHER THAT Council encourage other Municipalities to communicate directly with OASIS to allow for an open, transparent and collaborative dialogue with other stakeholders.

Carried

Should you have any questions in regards to the above resolution please contact our office.

Sincerely,

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

Vivian Kennedy
Deputy Clerk
Municipality of South Bruce

Summary of Content

Summary of Concerns: Lack of Proper Hauled Sewage Disposal locations, privately owned or Municipal Wastewater Plants

- 2.1 Definition of Municipal Waste as per Ontario Regulation 347 of the Environmental Protection Act
- 2.2 Zoning Issues and Concerns
- 2.3 Challenges Faced by Homeowners in Municipalities during Plant Upgrades and Maintenance
- 2.4 OASIS's Efforts to Promote Awareness and Proper Waste Disposal
- 2.5 Establishing an Open and Transparent Dialogue on the Issue
- 2.6 Providing Solutions and Recommendations to Municipalities
- 2.7 About Us

Summary of Concerns: Lack of Proper Hauled Sewage Disposal locations, privately owned or Municipal Wastewater Plants

The primary focus of our letter should not solely revolve around the lack of disposal capacity at wastewater treatment facilities. It is important to exercise caution in order to avoid potentially upsetting individuals. It should be noted that wastewater treatment facilities are not the exclusive or definitive method of approved disposal at present. We have members who have made substantial investments in their own lagoons, field sites, and alternative technologies. Additionally, many of our members have fostered positive relationships with their respective municipalities and have access to disposal options at wastewater plants. In order to provide a comprehensive perspective, we may consider including examples of other approved options for proper disposal, such as MECP licensed lagoon and field spreading sites. However, due to varying perceptions, a lack of understanding, and differences in requirements among municipalities, obtaining the necessary approvals can be challenging at times. It is important to emphasize that we are not suggesting wastewater treatment as the sole solution. We must explore and support all available options at this juncture.

We should acknowledge that certain municipalities have historically accepted hauled sewage from outside their boundaries for disposal at wastewater facilities or at lagoons and field spreading sites operated by licensed haulers. Haulers were able to enter into agreements with municipal wastewater facilities and paid a fee for the privilege of disposing at those sites. The operation and management of lagoon and field sites are the responsibility of the haulers, with an annual reporting requirement to the MECP. With the anticipated significant increase in residential construction, wastewater facilities will undoubtedly face capacity constraints, potentially limiting their ability to accept waste generated from outside their municipalities. Once again, it is crucial to avoid causing any discontent among municipalities or haulers.

The call to escalate residential construction has raised significant concerns, particularly regarding waste management. It is impossible to intensify home construction without considering how the resulting waste will be effectively handled. This includes not only domestic garbage waste, which may be directed to landfills, but also septic waste, whether through sewers or hauled sewage. The

interplay between residential growth and waste management must be addressed comprehensively to ensure sustainable and efficient practices.

In Ontario, the lack of proper disposal of sewage and septic waste to approved municipal wastewater plants poses significant challenges and concerns. This issue encompasses a range of environmental, public health, and regulatory factors that need to be addressed for the well-being of communities across the province.

Proper disposal of sewage and septic waste is essential to ensure public health and protect the environment. When sewage is not disposed of correctly, it can contaminate water sources, posing risks to human health and ecosystems. Approved municipal wastewater plants play a crucial role in treating and managing sewage to mitigate these risks. However, the failure to adhere to proper disposal guidelines leads to a variety of challenges.

One of the primary challenges arising from the lack of proper disposal is the contamination of water sources. Improperly disposed sewage and septic waste can seep into groundwater, lakes, rivers, and other water bodies, polluting them with harmful bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens. This contamination not only endangers the health of those who rely on these water sources for drinking, swimming, or recreational purposes but also harms aquatic life and ecosystems.

Furthermore, the inadequate disposal of sewage and septic waste can lead to ecological damage. The excess nutrients present in wastewater, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, can cause eutrophication in bodies of water. This excessive nutrient enrichment leads to the growth of harmful algal blooms, which deplete oxygen levels in water, harming fish and other aquatic organisms. The resulting imbalance in ecosystems can have far-reaching consequences for biodiversity and the overall health of ecosystems.

From a regulatory perspective, the improper disposal of sewage and septic waste violates Ontario's environmental protection laws and regulations. Ontario Regulation 347 of the Environmental Protection Act defines municipal waste, including sewage and septic waste, and outlines the proper procedures for its disposal. Non-compliance with these regulations not only undermines environmental protection efforts but can also lead to legal consequences for individuals or organizations responsible for the improper disposal.

Moreover, the lack of proper disposal infrastructure and facilities poses challenges for municipalities and homeowners. When municipalities decide to upgrade or perform maintenance on their wastewater treatment plants, the limited availability of approved disposal sites can hinder proper waste management. This limitation creates logistical difficulties for homeowners who need to find alternative disposal options. Homeowners may face delays and disruptions in their sewage management systems, which can be both inconvenient and costly.

Addressing the issues surrounding the lack of proper disposal of sewage and septic waste requires a multi-faceted approach. Collaboration among stakeholders, including municipalities, regulatory bodies, industry professionals, and homeowners, is crucial. It is essential to raise awareness among homeowners about the importance of proper waste disposal and educate them about available options. Additionally, expanding the capacity of approved disposal sites, promoting advanced treatment technologies, and establishing transparent dialogue between stakeholders can help overcome these challenges.

In conclusion, the lack of proper disposal of sewage and septic waste to approved municipal wastewater plants in Ontario poses significant challenges for public health, the environment, and regulatory compliance. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that involves

raising awareness, expanding disposal infrastructure, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. By prioritizing responsible sewage management, Ontario can protect its water resources, preserve ecosystems, and ensure the well-being of its communities.

2.1 Definition of Municipal Waste as per Ontario Regulation 347 of the Environmental Protection Act:

According to Ontario Regulation 347 of the Environmental Protection Act, municipal waste refers to waste generated by households, commercial establishments, and institutions within a municipality. It includes both solid and liquid waste, such as sewage, septic waste, and other forms of non-hazardous waste.

To put into perspective – OASIS Members service a wide range of areas and manage a total estimated volume of over 210 million gallons on a yearly basis servicing only Ontario residents.

Based on location septic haulers manage the following estimated amounts:

Northern Ontario: 25-45 million gallons
Central Ontario: 45-75 million gallons
Eastern Ontario: 35-55 million gallons
Western Ontario: 30-35 million gallons

2.2 Zoning Issues and Concerns:

It is imperative for municipalities to understand that operators within their townships who have acquired or already possess property do not always require rezoning. A key example of this lies in agriculturally zoned properties that can be effectively utilized for spreading purposes. Rezoning such properties to a "Commercial/Industrial" zoning category not only diminishes the value of the land but also proves to be unnecessary. This message carries significant importance as we aim to convey it to municipalities across various regions.

First and foremost, the practice that agriculturally zoned properties can be utilized for spreading purposes is crucial. These properties, which have been designated for agricultural use, often possess characteristics that make them suitable for activities such as manure spreading, composting, or other forms of land treatment. Such practices can contribute to soil fertility, promote sustainability, and ensure the efficient utilization of resources. By recognizing the inherent compatibility between agricultural zoning and spreading activities, municipalities can support operators in making the most of their land without resorting to rezoning.

Moreover, it is important to highlight refraining from unnecessary rezoning, municipalities can contribute to the preservation of the property's value and economic viability.

Furthermore, existing agricultural zoning designation already takes into account the specific characteristics and requirements of farming activities. These designations are typically established based on extensive research, land suitability assessments, and community development plans. Agricultural land also requires and uses many of the much needed nutrients provided by the septage being spread. MECP monitors these sites very closely with quarterly and annual reports from the operators of these sites. By recognizing the multifunctionality of agriculturally zoned land and its ability to accommodate spreading activities, municipalities can ensure that land-use regulations align with the intended purposes while minimizing the need for rezoning.

In conclusion, municipalities must comprehend the fact that operators within their townships who possess or acquire property do not always require rezoning. Agriculturally zoned properties can serve as effective spaces for spreading activities, enhancing soil fertility and resource utilization. By conveying this crucial message, we can encourage municipalities to support operators in making the most of their agriculturally zoned land while preserving its economic viability and minimizing unnecessary rezoning.

2.3 Challenges Faced by Homeowners in Municipalities during Plant Upgrades and Maintenance:

When municipalities decide to upgrade or perform maintenance on their wastewater treatment plants, the limited availability of disposal sites poses significant challenges for homeowners. Proper disposal becomes even more critical during these periods, as the capacity of approved facilities may be temporarily reduced. Homeowners and Haulers may face difficulties finding suitable disposal options, resulting in added costs, potential delays and disruptions in their sewage management systems.

2.4 OASIS's Efforts to Promote Awareness and Proper Waste Disposal:

As a proactive organization, OASIS is committed to creating awareness and encouraging proper waste disposal practices. The association aims to foster an open and transparent dialogue among stakeholders, including homeowners, municipalities, regulatory bodies, and industry professionals, to address the challenges associated with sewage and septic waste disposal.

2.5 Establishing an Open and Transparent Dialogue on the Issue:

OASIS actively engages with municipalities, conducting workshops, seminars, and public awareness campaigns to educate policy makers about the importance of proper waste disposal. By fostering open communication channels, OASIS encourages dialogue between all stakeholders, facilitating the sharing of knowledge, best practices, and innovative solutions.

2.6 Providing Solutions and Recommendations to Municipalities:

To address the limitations in disposal sites and support municipalities in managing sewage and septic waste effectively, OASIS offers solutions and recommendations. These may include advocating for the development of additional approved disposal sites, promoting advanced treatment technologies, and collaborating with relevant authorities to streamline waste management processes. OASIS strives to provide municipalities with the necessary tools and guidance to ensure responsible sewage management within their jurisdictions.

2.7 About Us:

The Ontario Association of Sewage Industry Services (OASIS) plays a vital role in the promotion and advancement of sewage management practices in Ontario. With the objective of fostering responsible and sustainable approaches to sewage disposal, OASIS brings together industry professionals who are passionate about protecting public health, preserving the environment, and complying with regulatory requirements.

As a non-profit organization, OASIS operates as a collective voice for its members, representing their interests and advocating for environmentally friendly practices within the sewage industry. By collaborating with stakeholders from various sectors, including homeowners, municipalities, regulatory bodies, and experts in the field, OASIS strives to address challenges, share knowledge, and develop effective solutions that benefit the entire community.

OASIS recognizes the significance of proper waste disposal in safeguarding public health and minimizing the environmental impact of sewage management. The association actively engages in initiatives that raise awareness among homeowners and communities about the importance of responsible sewage practices. Through workshops, seminars, public awareness campaigns, and educational programs, OASIS aims to empower individuals and organizations with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions regarding sewage disposal.

Moreover, OASIS fosters an open and transparent dialogue among stakeholders to address the issues and concerns associated with sewage management. By facilitating discussions, sharing best practices, and collaborating with regulatory bodies, OASIS works towards finding practical and innovative solutions for the industry. The association strives to create a supportive network where stakeholders can exchange ideas, seek guidance, and collaborate on initiatives that enhance sewage management practices across Ontario.

Recognizing the challenges faced by municipalities during plant upgrades and maintenance, OASIS actively supports the development of sustainable solutions. By providing recommendations, advocating for the expansion of approved disposal sites, and promoting the adoption of advanced treatment technologies, OASIS seeks to assist municipalities in managing sewage and septic waste effectively.

In summary, the Ontario Association of Sewage Industry Services (OASIS) serves as a leading advocate for responsible sewage management in Ontario. Through its collective efforts, OASIS aims to promote awareness, foster dialogue, and provide recommendations to stakeholders, ensuring that sewage disposal practices prioritize public health, environmental preservation, and regulatory compliance.

Understanding the Limitations on Hauled Septage Disposal Sites in Ontario



Summary of Discussion



Definition of Municipal Waste as per Ontario Regulation 347 of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA)



Zoning Issues and Concerns



Challenges Faced by Homeowners in Municipalities during Plant Upgrades and Maintenance



OASIS's Efforts to Promote Awareness and Proper Waste Disposal



Providing Solutions and Recommendations to Municipalities



Final Thoughts

About OASIS

OASIS was established in 1991 to support and represent businesses in the septic, portable toilet and biosolid land application industry. We are dedicated to working with various levels of government, associations and those in related fields to improve and conform to regulations and guidelines pertaining to the sustainability of the environment in the Province of Ontario.



OASIS Strives



To maintain and promote the highest standards of safety, environmental responsibility, regulatory compliance and environmental due diligence.



To institute open forum discussions regarding operational challenges, implementation of maintenance protocols, employee development, administrative practices, and operator safety programs.



To act as a liaison between several tiers of government and Ministries while representing the interests of the industry with legislative recommendations.



To promote uniformity and consistency throughout the industry.

Overall Concern

In Ontario, the lack of proper disposal of septage and septic waste to approved municipal wastewater plants including Ministry of Environment approved wastewater lagoons and field spreading sites poses significant challenges and concerns. This issue encompasses a range of environmental, public health, and regulatory factors that need to be addressed for the well-being of communities across the province.



Lack of Hauled Septage Disposal Sites in Ontario

Proper disposal of septage and septic waste is essential to ensure public health and protect the environment. When septage is not disposed of correctly, it can contaminate water sources, posing risks to human health and ecosystems. Approved municipal wastewater plants play a crucial role in treating and managing septage to mitigate these risks.

- One of the primary challenges arising from the lack of proper disposal is the contamination of water sources. Improperly disposed septage and septic waste can seep into groundwater, lakes, rivers, and other water bodies, polluting them with harmful bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens. This contamination not only endangers the health of those who rely on these water sources for drinking, swimming, or recreational purposes but also harms aquatic life and ecosystems.

Municipal Concern: The call to escalate residential construction has raised significant concerns, particularly regarding waste management. It is impossible to intensify home construction without considering how the resulting waste will be effectively handled. This includes not only domestic garbage waste, which may be directed to landfills, but also septic waste, whether through sewers or hauled septage.

Misconception and Concerns

Ministry of Environment driven studies in partnership with OASIS have shown that application of hauled septage on agricultural properties is a safe and beneficial when completed in accordance with Ministry guidelines. This practice provides effective use of important nutrients. This practise also has been utilized for centuries with the application of manure as a common agricultural practise.

Lack of disposal sites for septic systems poses concerns for the Environment causing homeowners to “take matters into their own hands” if proper disposal facilities are not available.

Definition of “Municipal Waste”

Under Ontario Regulation 347 of the Environmental Protection Act:

Municipal Waste: Refers to waste generated by households, commercial establishments, and institutions within a municipality. It includes both solid and liquid waste, such as septage, septic waste, and other forms of non-hazardous waste.

- Point of Consideration: Household garbage generated in the municipality is the responsibility of the municipality to dispose and manage.

Volume of Hauled Septage Managed

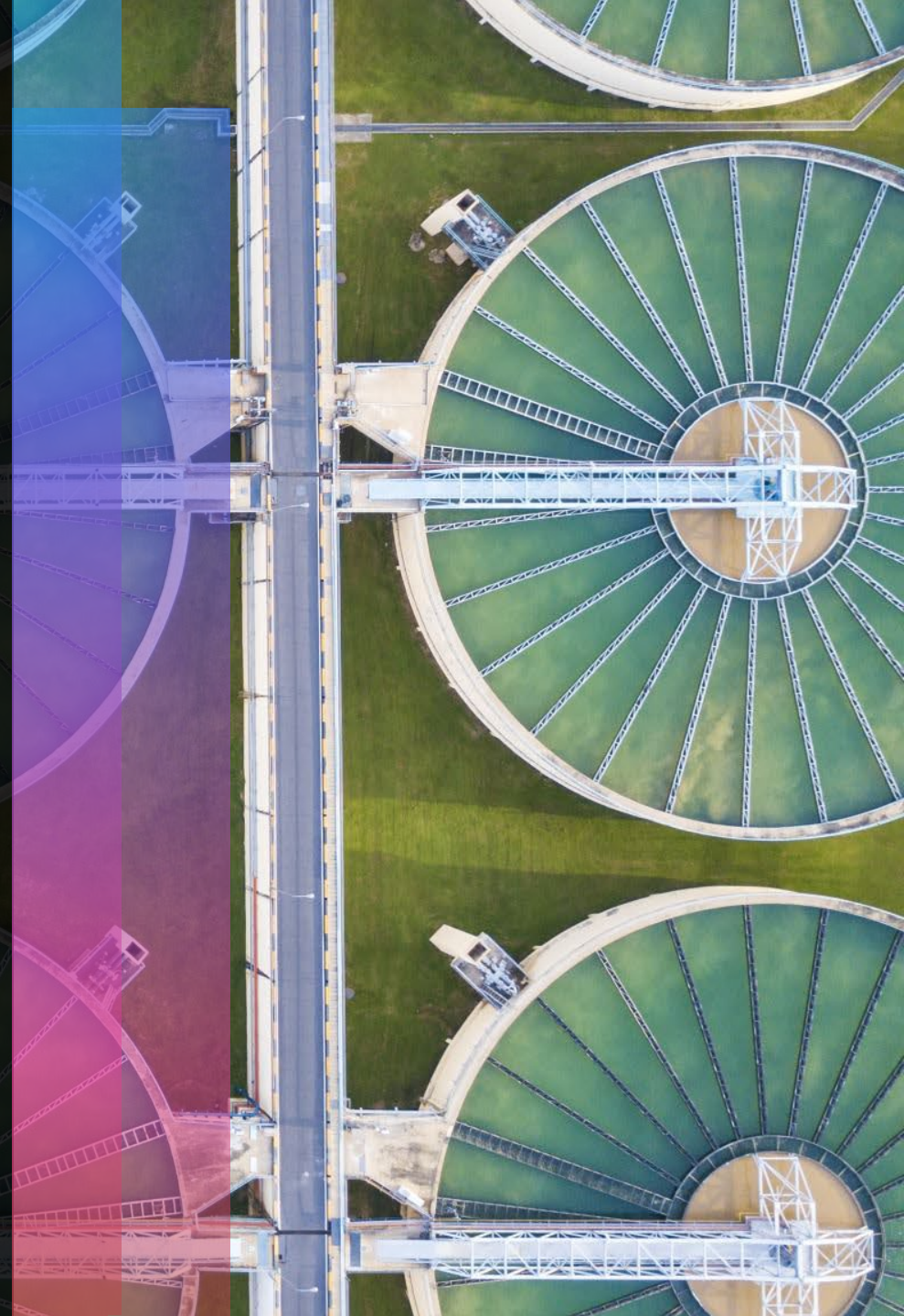
OASIS Members service a wide range of areas and manage a total estimated volume of over 210 million gallons on a yearly basis servicing only Ontario residents.

Northern Ontario: 25-45 million gallons

Central Ontario: 45-75 million gallons

Eastern Ontario: 35-55 million gallons

Western Ontario: 30-35 million gallons



Municipal Zoning

- Existing agricultural zoning designation already takes into account the specific characteristics and requirements of farming activities. These designations are typically established based on extensive research, land suitability assessments, and community development plans. Agricultural land also requires and uses many of the required nutrients provided by the septage being spread.
- MECP monitors these sites very closely with quarterly and annual reports from the operators of these sites to ensure compliance and no regulatory limits are breached. By recognizing the multifunctionality of agriculturally zoned land and its ability to accommodate spreading activities, municipalities can ensure that land-use regulations align with the intended purposes while minimizing the need for rezoning.
- Municipalities must comprehend the fact that operators within their townships who possess or acquire property do not always require rezoning. Agriculturally zoned properties can serve as effective spaces for spreading activities, enhancing soil fertility and resource utilization. Rezoning such properties to a "Commercial/Industrial" zoning category needlessly decreases the land's value and is often unwarranted.

Municipal Challenges

- Many rural housing, community centers, municipal buildings are on septic systems and do not have a common municipal wastewater treatment plant to manage the septage produced in the respective municipality
- When municipalities decide to upgrade or perform maintenance on their wastewater treatment plants, the limited availability of disposal sites poses significant challenges for homeowners.
- Proper disposal becomes even more critical during these periods, as the capacity of approved facilities may be temporarily reduced or eliminated
- Septic Haulers are providing a service to homeowners to help effectively and safely manage the septage produced in their residence or facility
- **Misconception**: When a homeowner requires a septic to be emptied the responsibility does NOT fall entirely on the septic operator to dispose the waste. Municipalities need to provide the infrastructure/resources to dispose of the waste produced in their municipality properly and safely.

Raising Awareness

As a proactive organization, OASIS is committed to creating awareness and encouraging proper waste disposal practices. The association aims to foster an open and transparent dialogue among various stakeholders, including homeowners, municipalities, regulatory bodies, and industry professionals, to address the challenges associated with septage and septic waste disposal.

Municipal Approval: Providing companies the ability to apply and provide Ministry approved and monitored disposal sites is a viable and effective option in the event municipal wastewater infrastructures are not available or provide the capacity required to manage the waste produced in their respective municipalities.

These include but not limited to:

- Ministry of Environment approved wastewater lagoons with the option of introducing alternative wastewater management technologies
- Field Spreading sites

Offering Solutions and Resources

OASIS actively engages with municipalities, conducting workshops, seminars, and public awareness campaigns to educate policy makers about the importance of proper waste disposal. By fostering open communication channels, OASIS encourages dialogue between all stakeholders, facilitating the sharing of knowledge, best practices, and innovative solutions.

To address the limitations in disposal sites and support municipalities in managing septage and septic waste effectively, OASIS offers solutions and recommendations. These may include advocating for the development of additional approved disposal sites, promoting advanced treatment technologies, and collaborating with relevant authorities to streamline waste management processes. OASIS strives to provide municipalities with the necessary tools and guidance to ensure responsible septage management within their jurisdictions.

Action Items

OASIS would like to propose the following action items:

1. A copy of this presentation along with the formal letter submitted by OASIS to be sent to all levels of Municipal Governments across the Province including but not limited to the various Provincial Ministries including the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks and The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and all other relevant parties.
2. OASIS be involved in discussions and communications pertaining to the discussed issue to help provide recommendations and solutions to help mitigate the issues surrounding approved disposal sites
3. Allow OASIS to communicate directly with other Municipalities in the Province of Ontario to allow for a open, transparent and collaborative dialogue with other stakeholders



Final Thoughts



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