REGION OF OTTAWA-CARLETON | MEMORANDUM
RÉGION D'OTTAWA-CARLETON | NOTE DE SERVICE

Our File/N/Réf.
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DATE 29 August 2000

TO/DEST. Chair and Members of Regional Council

FROM/EXP. Director Water Environment Protection Division
Environment and Transportation Department

SUBJECT/OBJET **BIOSOLIDS UTILIZATION PROGRAM STATUS UPDATE**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the status of the current Biosolids Management Plan and the approach of the Water Environment Protection Division to update the plan.

CURRENT PROGRAM BACKGROUND

In 1996, Regional Council approved the current Biosolids Management Plan. This plan was based on several years of work including the review of a vast array of management options, conducting pilot land application projects and extensive consultation.

The Water Environment Protection Division (WEPD) started land-applying biosolids as a pilot program in 1993. At that time, a Biosolids Technical Advisory Committee was formed to provide a forum to discuss feedback received from the pilot program, findings from the extensive public consultation activities and technical review of the various biosolids management options. The Biosolids Technical Advisory Committee completed its mandate with the approval of the Biosolids Management Plan by Council in 1996. The public consultation component was an integral part of the planning process, where a wide range of stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the various aspects of biosolids recycling.

Information Previously Distributed
To be listed on Planning and Environment
Committee Agenda of 12 September 2000

Land application of biosolids is regulated in Ontario on a site-by-site basis through a Conditional Certificate of Approval, based upon the Guidelines for the Utilization of Biosolids and other Wastes on Agricultural Land.

Based upon experience gained through the Biosolids Land Application Pilot program, a long term Biosolids Management Plan was developed. The planning included an evaluation of environmental impacts as well as economic and technical factors. This plan recommended the existing program, where about 50% of the biosolids are applied to local farmland and 50% are used in interim cover at the Carp Road landfill site.

Since 1997, over 53,548 wet tons of biosolids have been successfully land applied to farms in and around the Region of Ottawa-Carleton on over 2,117 hectares of land. In the current year, to the end of 03July, 188 wet tons of biosolids have been beneficially used on farmland, which is approximately 36% of what would have normally been spread to date. This is due to the abnormally wet season experienced to date.

The hauling and land application of biosolids is currently contracted to Terratec Environmental Ltd. (a division of Azurix North America). The current contract started in February 1997. The contractor is responsible for assessing potential land application sites, preparing applications for site approvals from the Ministry of Environment for land application of biosolids and for hauling and spreading the biosolids. The contractor is also required to notify neighbours of upcoming land application activity and to collect and analyse well water samples from wells on properties adjoining land application sites.

WEPD reviews and approves all applications for site Certificates of Approval, and carries out regular inspections to verify compliance with the Certificate of Approval conditions, the Guidelines and the operating contract. WEPD also responds to public inquiries about the program, reviews all well results and receives weekly updates and monthly reports from the contractor.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

In the past two months, some concerns have been expressed by the public about the Biosolids Land Application Program. The public is primarily concerned about risks of well water contamination associated with farm practices including biosolids application. To address these concerns, WEPD is enhancing the well water-monitoring component of the program, by expanding the criteria for well analysis and by increasing the number of samples collected. To date, there have been no incidents of well interference resulting from the land application of biosolids in Ottawa-Carleton.

There are standard setback distances prescribed in the Guidelines as well as the individual Certificates of Approval from wells and from ground water. WEPD has consulted with the Regional Health Department on the suitability of the setback distance observed from private wells, as well as on the suitability of the indicator parameters used in the analysis of the well water. The Regional Health Department has indicated that it is satisfied that the land application of Biosolids will not interfere with private wells if the provincial guidelines are adhered to.

A specific item brought to the attention of WEPD was that the public was concerned about the potential for biosolids to be applied to a site adjacent to Castor Valley Elementary School. In response to this concern, WEPD has arranged to meet with officials of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board to discuss the concerns and has agreed that the site will not be spread until such a meeting has taken place. WEPD expects to meet with officials from the School Board in September.

BIOSOLIDS MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The update to the existing Biosolids Management Plan is expected to be completed in the spring of 2001. The Biosolids Management Plan update will include a review of current and emerging biosolids management technologies and regulatory considerations, an evaluation of the alternative technologies, several small pilot studies and the selection and development of a long-term plan for managing biosolids in Ottawa-Carleton. The update is using the Class Environmental Assessment (EA) model to update the Biosolids Management Plan. The purpose of using the Class EA model is to ensure a high degree of public consultation and acceptance of the final product. The public will be consulted through open houses, a workshop as well as having representation on the advisory committee.

Approved by
N. B. Schepers, P.Eng.

DR/bs