

# Minister sets out expectations of Clean Water Bill

*Laurel Broten spoke at a press conference in Sudbury Thursday*

**BY KEITH LACEY**

KLACEY@NORTHERNLIFE.CA

When Ontario's Environment Minister brings her children to visit family here in Greater Sudbury, she wants them to know they are swimming in and drinking safe, clean water.

"I married a good old Sudbury boy," said Laurel Broten, who was in Sudbury Thursday to promote the Clean Water Act she introduced in the Legislature in December.

Last November, the government committed \$67.5 million to municipalities to help them better protect drinking water sources. As part of a five-year commitment, the Nickel District Conservation Authority (NDCA) received \$275,000 to help ensure it has staff and resources to work with community partners to develop source protection plans, said Broten.

The Clean Water Act, once passed, will ensure communities are able to identify potential risks to their supply of drinking water and take action to reduce or eliminate risks, said Broten.

Municipalities, conservation authorities, landowners, farmers, industry and community groups and members of the public are being asked to join together to ensure common goals and make clean drinking water a reality in every municipality in the province, she said.

"We want to protect source water at every stage from source to tap," said Broten.

The new legislation will stress prevention and provide funding so scientists in each community can conduct testing and provide analysis so community leaders can tackle any threats to clean drinking water sources, said Broten.

"Municipalities will be able to look at existing and potential problems and develop strategies to address them," she said.

The Clean Water Act is not simply a piece of legislation, but a directive to every municipality in the province to ensure they must take action to ensure citizens have clean drinking water at all times, she said.

Bob Rogers, vice-chair of the NDCA, said the organization



**BROTEN**

*Northern Life  
Feb. 26, 2006*

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welcomes the funding and challenges presented by the Clean Water Act.

The community will be encouraged to participate in finding effective solutions through public consultation and the government has made it clear it will not accept plans that have not had full consultation with municipal leaders, farmers, industry, health officials and the public, said Rogers.

Of the government's \$67.5 million commitment, more than \$51 million will be spent over the next five years for technical studies and \$16.5 million for conservation authorities over the next 12 months for staff and resources, said Broten.

The act sets out five steps for communities to follow when developing plans to protect drinking water sources. They include:

■ **Pinpointing vulnerable water sources.** Conservation authorities and municipalities will map out drinking water sources that need special protection and include areas immediately around wellheads and water intakes, recharge areas and aquifers.

■ **Building on good science.** Local authorities will be asked to use a science-based approach to measure threats to water quality and quantity and decide

if a threat needs immediate action, monitoring or can be managed over time with voluntary action.

■ **Bringing local partners together.** Once threats have been identified, municipalities would work with conservation authorities, farmers, landowners, industry and the community to come up with effective plans to address them.

■ **Putting plans into action.** This can be done through by-laws, education programs, incentives, land use planning initiatives and partnerships. Municipalities will be given special authority to take action against significant threats to vulnerable drinking water supplies.

■ **Staying vigilant.** All plans would include continuous monitoring and reporting to measure effectiveness of actions taken to protect drinking water sources and ensure they are protected in the future.

Municipalities are also being asked to develop and implement strategies to manage risks around municipal water supply wells and intakes, said Broten.

They would have the authority to require business, farmers and other landowners to remove significant risks to drinking water, she said.

The Clean Water Act is scheduled to become law within the next few months.