

# Canadian BIOSOLIDS | Partenariat canadien sur Partnership | les BIOSOLIDES

July 26, 2007

Re: Formation of a Canadian Biosolids Partnership and CCME Work Programs

Municipal stakeholders in biosolids are aware that the CCME Development Committee on Municipal Waste Water Effluents Strategy has completed its technical work and that a proposal for a strategy on biosolids management was identified as a future action item.

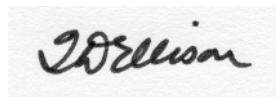
Several years ago, a proposal to form a Canadian Biosolids Partnership, similar to that in the USA was made and supported by stakeholders including representatives of federal, provincial, territorial and municipal agencies having an interest in the subject. Since then, a number of steps to get this underway have been taken and some progress has been made (please see the attached background document).

A meeting of 44 Canadian stakeholder representatives took place on June 28, 2007 in Moncton, NB following the International Water Association's Biosolids Speciality Conference – ***Moving Forward Wastewater Biosolids Sustainability: Technical, Managerial and Public Synergy***. A review of the information and the scope and structure of the proposed Canadian Partnership took place (see also the background document). Two initiatives in particular were identified: to keep the Ministers informed and to contact the Environmental Policy and Planning Committee of CCME regarding forming a liaison group under EPPC to work with us.

In an effort to promote nationally harmonized standards and best management practices it is suggested the CCME Environmental Policy and Planning Committee consider forming a Biosolids Liaison Group to participate in and further the goals proposed for the Biosolids Partnership. The Liaison Group would have the advantage of tapping directly into the wide knowledge and experience of the municipal and other sectors producing, managing or using organic (biosolid) residuals. Our common goal is that these residuals be and be seen to be valuable, environmentally beneficial products contributing to our sustainability goals. The stakeholders recognize that CCME may eventually produce guidelines or best management practices to serve as the basis for regulatory programs. This suggestion does not preclude this step, but offers the opportunity for CCME to obtain and harness the professional inputs of willing partners, before regulatory decisions are considered.

At your convenience, representatives of these stakeholders are available to the EPPC to respond to any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely,



T. D. Ellison  
Executive Director  
Canadian Water and Wastewater Association

## Canadian Biosolids Partnership (July 26, 2007)

### Background

The management of wastewater residual sludge or “biosolids” is one of the world’s most critical environmental issues due to population growth and the vast increase in urbanization and resultant sewage and industrial wastewater treatment. Advanced sewage treatment and sustainable biosolids recycling is practiced by a handful of Canadian municipalities. However, in many cases sewage is still discharged to the marine environment with little regard for pollution and the continual depletion of nutrient resources to land, forests and agriculture. A key management issue is addressing and changing negative public perception about biosolids reprocessing, environmentally sound land application practices and other potential uses.

In November 2004, a group of stakeholders in municipal biosolids responded positively to a suggestion by Mr. Ronald J. LeBlanc, the Chairman of the Greater Moncton Sewerage Commission, that a national biosolids partnership should be formed in Canada to promote harmonization in the approaches to biosolids management, uses and regulation across the country. The goal: to promote conservation and sustainable reuse. Support was confirmed at the *1<sup>st</sup> National Conference on Wastewater Management* held in Montréal in March 2005. Subsequently key stakeholders met with the US National Biosolids Partnership, (supported by the US EPA and hosted by the Water Environment Federation) and prepared a business case for the Canadian Biosolids Partnership. This was circulated to over 200 municipalities and all Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers for the Environment and for Agriculture in late 2006. Supportive responses were received from all levels of government, engineering and environmental consultants, and environmental groups.

Earlier this year, respondents, including more than 30 municipalities and 9 federal and provincial agencies were approached to seek a commitment to participate in taking some interim steps forward: filling in gaps in the national data on biosolids production and uses, identifying standards, regulations, best practices, and conducting a global scan to find out what other countries are doing.

A meeting of 44 representatives of these Canadian stakeholders took place on June 28, 2007 in Moncton, NB following the International Water Association’s Biosolids Speciality Conference – *Moving Forward Wastewater Biosolids Sustainability: Technical, Managerial and Public Synergy*. A general review of the information and the proposed scope and structure of the Canadian Partnership were discussed.

The following five steps were agreed upon:

1. A small group would re-examine the current business case to take into account suggestions made in Moncton for a fuller statement of the benefits of the Partnership.
2. Commitment to the interim steps program would continue to be sought (either financial or in-kind) to supplement the approximate \$40,000 already obtained to support data and research projects.
3. A letter would be sent to the members of the Policy and Planning Committee of CCME informing them of the continued and expanding support for this initiative and suggesting that they form a Liaison Group to further the process and obtain input.
4. A letter should be sent also to all the Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Environment informing them of the current developments and continued support.
5. A follow-up meeting would take place in Ottawa on November 14, 2007 in association with the CWWA’s annual liaison event with federal and national agencies – *The 2007 Window-on-Ottawa*.

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In addition, it should be noted that organizers and participants in similar Partnerships and Groups from around the world agreed at the Moncton Conference to form an International Alliance of biosolids groups for the purposes of exchanging information on national experiences and approaches. Canada therefore has the golden opportunity to be part of this group as long as we have credible support and participation from the senior levels of government.

The stakeholders supporting the Biosolids Partnership believe in and seek the active participation by federal, provincial and territorial government departments and agencies since we have a common goal – that residuals of wastewater services (whether municipal or industrial) represent an untapped environmental resource which can be managed to support our collective sustainable development objectives in a manner that protects public and environmental health and safety.

The many potential uses for these biosolids residuals in current practice include: land application for agriculture and reforestation; mine tailing site reclamation, energy recovery, and compost production. Other uses such as cellulose-based ethanol production have not yet reached Canada or are at a bench scale stage, e.g. phosphorus recovery.

Unfortunately, significant portions of wastewater sludges and biosolids are still sent to landfill and do not contribute to meeting our environmental, public health or sustainability goals.