

Catherine Wotton

From: Hilda Esedebe <hilda.esedebe@municipalengineers.on.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 5:06 PM
To: Dan Terzievski
Subject: MEA REQUESTS YOUR SUPPORT FOR MCEA REFORM
Attachments: 161_1516224636_OGRA_Draft_Resolution_to_Heads_of_Council_Jan_2018.pdf

Categories: Read by Catherine

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Dear MEA Members,

Re: Improving Municipal Class Environmental Assessment processes

The Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) process was developed by MEA to provide municipalities with a risk-based approach to comply with the *Environmental Assessment Act* for both capital projects and infrastructure maintenance activities. Over time, the MCEA process has become more complex, delaying projects and significantly increasing costs. In fact, a 2014 study by the Residential and Civil Construction Association of Ontario (RCCAO) showed that it was typically taking almost 27 months to complete the process for Schedule B and C projects, with study and consultant costs averaging \$386,500 (not including municipal staff time).

A coalition of EA stakeholders, such as MEA, RCCAO, the Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA) and many others, agree that EA reform is needed and have been pressing the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) to make changes.

Last February, a joint application for review was submitted through the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario and forwarded to the MOECC. The Ministry responded positively to the application in mid-April 2017 and committed to completing a comprehensive review by December 2018. A good summary of this is found in the Sept./Oct. 2017 edition of *ReNew* that you can find [HERE](#) [Insert hyperlink]. Although MOECC accepted the arguments made both in the joint application and by the AG, little progress was made in 2017.

Now with the provincial election scheduled for June 2018, there are limited opportunities for the Ontario government to implement legislative and policy changes. Realizing that this window is closing, MEA and RCCAO organized a workshop on November 29, 2017 where 40 municipal practitioners shared their frustrations with the Class EA process. During the discussion, the top priority for EA reform was identified as improving the Part II Order Request (PIIOR) process.

We are pleased to report that MOECC has now put a team in place and is committed to beginning consultation in early 2018. This team will turn its attention to longer-term improvements that will require more discussion. Recognizing time is limited, MEA also wants to implement short-term EA improvements that can be implemented now.

Without speedy reform, Ontario municipalities risk losing out on funding for projects that are subject to the MCEA process. This simply is neither proper infrastructure planning nor good asset management.

For this campaign to gain traction, the involvement of municipalities across Ontario is vital. The Municipal Engineers Association (MEA) is calling on municipal councils to assist our push to improve the Class EA process. OGRA has distributed a draft resolution (see attached) that was sent to all heads of council and municipal clerks in Ontario.

As a leader in your municipality, you can complement this work by participating in a letter writing campaign.

This is an important issue. Ensure your voice is heard.

Regards,

Hilda Esedebe, P.Eng., MBA, M.Sc.

Infrastructure Services Coordinator

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Wednesday, January 17, 2018

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«Contacts__Title»

«Companies__Company_Name»

The Ontario Good Roads Association is seeking reforms to the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) process. In its current form the MCEA process has made municipal infrastructure projects longer in duration and more costly. The OGRA Board of Directors encourages all municipalities in Ontario to adopt the following resolution that calls on the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change to accelerate the Application for Review of the MCEA process.

Links to further background information about the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process can be found below the resolution.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

Whereas a coalition of the Municipal Engineers Association (MEA) and the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario have successfully applied to have a review of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process conducted under Part IV (Section 61) of the *Environmental Bill of Rights Act, 1993* (EBR Act);

And whereas impact studies and public meetings required by the MCEA process often take two years or more to complete before construction can commence;

And whereas the MCEA requirements to evaluate alternatives are often not well aligned with prior or municipal land use planning decisions;

And whereas analysis by the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO) has demonstrated that the time to complete an EA rose from 19 months to 26.7 months and costs went from an average of \$113,300 to \$386,500;

And whereas the Auditor General of Ontario has tabled recommendations for modernizing the MCEA process;

And whereas in spite of written commitments made by the Ministry of the Environment between 2013-2015, no action has been taken;

And whereas local projects that do not have the necessary approvals could lose out on the next intake of Build Canada funding;

Therefore be it resolved that «Companies__Company_Name» requests that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change take immediate steps to expedite the response process for Part II Orders or Bump-Up requests, as part of the s.61 review to improve MCEA process times and reduce study costs;

And further that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change support changes to better integrate and harmonize the MCEA process with processes defined under the *Planning Act*;

And further that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change amend the scope of MCEA reports and studies to reduce duplication with existing public processes and decisions made under municipal Official Plans and provincial legislation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The following links provide a comprehensive background of the work that the Municipal Engineers Association and the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario have done to advance this issue of MCEA reform.

- [October 2017 Correspondence from the Municipal Engineers Association and the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario to the Hon. Chris Ballard, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.](#)
- [ReNew Magazine editorial examining the need to review the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process](#)
- [The Development Approval Roundtable Action Plan, November 2017](#)
- [Meeting Notes from the November 29, 2017 Evolution of the MCEA Workshop.](#)
- [The MEA Companion Guide for the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Manual](#)
- [Are Ontario's Municipal Class Environmental Assessments Worth the Added Time and Costs? The 2014 Edition](#)

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Scott Butler, OGRA's Manager of Policy and Research at 289-291-6472 ext. 24 or via email at scott@ogra.org.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line that curves upwards at the end.

Scott R. Butler

OGRA, Policy and Research

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