



Toxics-Free
Great Lakes
Binational Network

The Canada-Ontario Agreement and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement – An ENGO Perspective

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Webinar

Wednesday July 7, 2021

1:00 p.m. -2:30 p.m. ET

Toxics-Free Great Lakes Binational Network

- ▶ Subnetwork under Great Lakes Network
- ▶ Aim: facilitate binational coordination of ENGOs and others in advancing progress on toxic chemicals under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement
- ▶ Approach:
 - ▶ Engage directly with Parties to GLWQA through Annex 3
 - ▶ Provide input to Parties, including on designating new chemicals of mutual concern (CMCs), development of binational strategies
 - ▶ Engage with ENGOs, individuals transnationally
 - ▶ Increase public awareness of chemicals issues in Great Lakes, including via webinars, blogs
- ▶ Annex 2 of COA is tool for Canada and Ontario to implement the Annex 3 of GLWQA

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Guest Blog – Zero Discharge & Virtual Elimination of Toxic Chemicals in the Great Lakes: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

April 12, 2021

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Yesterday
Nearly two thousand people gathered in Windsor, Ontario, in October 1993 for a spirited International Joint Commission (IJC) biennial meeting focused on zero discharge (ZD), virtual elimination (VE), and the sunset of the use of certain toxic substances in the Great Lakes basin. Five hundred of these

Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, Chemicals of Mutual Concern (CMCs)

- ▶ CMCs: toxic substances designated by the Parties originating from anthropogenic sources and posing risks to human health or the environment
- ▶ Once CMCs are designated, Parties develop binational strategies, coordinated development of domestic water quality standards, and other activities

Designated CMCs*	Nominated CMCs
Hexabromocyclododecane (HBCD)	Radionuclides
Long-Chain Perfluorinated carboxylic acids (LC-PFCAs)	Sulfates
Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA)	PAHs
Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS)	Alkyl-lead
Mercury	
Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers (PBDEs)	
Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)	
Short-Chain Chlorinated Paraffins (SCCPs)	

*: Binational strategies in bold have been developed, finalized

COA 2021: Annex 2: Harmful Pollutants Commitments

Chemicals of Mutual Concern:

- ▶ Implement binational strategies
- ▶ Jointly nominate new CMCs

Beyond GLWQA:

- Specific attention to CMCs in consumer products and end-of-life issues
 - E.g., “Reduce or eliminate” ... “products containing CMCs”
- Salts: references to chloride in water
- Plastics: major detailed section on plastic pollution in Great Lakes

Implement through Canada-Wide Strategy & Action Plan on Zero Plastic Waste, CEPA, provincial waste programs, and extended producer responsibility

COA 2021: Annex 2: Harmful Pollutants: Problems in Commitments

- ▶ No targets or time frames for action
- ▶ Keep referring to “CMCs and other harmful pollutants” but give no indication of how and when they will decide on these
- ▶ One result is “existing CMCs are periodically reviewed for removal”
- ▶ Salts: Little detail on actions and scattered among annexes
- ▶ Plastics: Ontario commits to “exploring for innovative technologies such as thermal treatment and chemical recycling that can recover valuable resources, such as plastic resins, synthetic fuels and electricity, from waste”

Toxics-Free Great Lakes Binational Network: Possible Roles in COA

- ▶ Take lead in rallying and coordinating ENGO and public input into CMC process and in monitoring progress on the commitments in COA
- ▶ Advise, assist in nominations of substances/class of substances for CMC designation by community members
- ▶ Regarding salts (chloride), recommend others (e.g. WWF-Canada) take the lead, given current work on this issue
- ▶ Plastics - take lead in leveraging COA process in existing work at Ontario, federal level



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DISCUSSION

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