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Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario

RCCAO calls for Lake Simcoe infrastructure plan consistent with provincial growth strategy

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The way growth in the Lake Simcoe area proceeds is important to the construction industry because planned and diverse growth will provide more project opportunities, one association says.

Ontario recently introduced the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, designed to minimize the impact of rapid development and limit ecological damage in the Lake Simcoe area.

The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario recently made a submission to Ontario's environment ministry stating it supports environmental stewardship but also emphasizing that any plan for the area must be consistent with provincial growth plans and principles.

"RCCAO supports the principles inherent in Places to Grow, notably growth management policies and the recognition of the important role to be played by strategic infrastructure for forecasted population and economic growth," said Andy Manahan, executive directors of RCCAO.

The RCCAO called for a broadening of the proposed act's mandate to improve and protect the health of Lake Simcoe's watershed system while accommodating "the multiple uses of the lake and surrounding region." These uses include recreational, agriculture and residential and employment growth opportunities projected in the province's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Manahan said that provincial policies related to transportation, water and waste water systems and community infrastructure achieve the "appropriate balance" between growth and

environmental sustainability and protection.

The province has explained that the intent of any Lake Simcoe plan is that it becomes a fundamental tool for protecting it and be a part of all land-use planning. Lowering the level of phosphorus in the lake and addressing storm sewer-water runoff and development practices is to be addressed by the proposed legislation.

The RCCAO said that the construction industry, along with municipalities and other industries already are facing new rules and regulations around growth and water. Manahan said a Lake Simcoe protection plan must recognize the role “well-maintained” water and waste water infrastructure plays.

Manahan noted that the government’s research indicates that the main sources of phosphorous in Lake Simcoe are from inflowing rivers (37 per cent) and atmospheric (34 per cent), while wastewater and sewage accounts only for a small amount (seven per cent).

Ontario needs to have dedicated funding programs and mechanisms in place to ensure efficient and appropriate water and sewer infrastructure is built in the area, added Manahan.