

## **Massive amounts of Ontario drinking water being wasted due to leaky pipes: RCCAO report**

The study indicates that many Ontario municipalities report an estimated leakage rate of at least 10 per cent, but that the rates could actually be as high as 40 per cent.

June 25, 2021 CCE



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Millions of cubic metres of treated drinking water are being pumped into the ground every year across Ontario municipalities as a result of leaky and broken pipes, according to a new report from the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO).

The study indicates that many Ontario municipalities report an estimated leakage rate of at least 10 per cent. However, it also notes that reports by consultants who conducted actual assessments show that rates in Ontario could be as high as nearly 40 per cent. One analysis for the Town of Smiths Falls estimated that rates between 2003 and 2019 ranged between 41 per cent and 67 per cent.

The City of Toronto has consistently reported a leakage rate of 10-15 per cent, the study notes, which means it wastes 103 million litres per day. The volume of losses is equivalent to supplying the daily demand of a system servicing a population of about 250,000 people or filling more than 15,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools every year.

The study was done by Tamer E. El-Diraby, a professor in the department of civil and mineral engineering at the University of Toronto. Following up on a previous assessment in 2009, the new report makes several recommendations, including continued funding for asset management projects and added investments in municipalities looking to innovate.

“The findings of this study are alarming because they confirm that our water infrastructure is aging and in dire need of repair,” said RCCAO executive director Nadia Todorova. “Governments must provide sustained funding to fix and replace these critical infrastructure assets. It’s incredibly inefficient and almost singlehandedly defeating our water conservation goals when treated drinking water never makes it to the taps because of leaky pipes.”

Addressing water leakage has myriad benefits and cost-saving potential for municipalities and for the Ontarians who effectively pay for the cost of this leakage, RCCAO said. For example, the study found that fixing leakage in a single section of the water system in York Region saved 139,000 cubic metres a year in water, or the equivalent of 75 elevated tanks, and also \$426,000 annually in cost as well as 102 megawatt hours a year in energy, or enough to power 11 homes for a year, and 4.1 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> for the year.

[Click here](#) to read the study.