

# DAILY COMMERCIAL NEWS

## AND CONSTRUCTION RECORD

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Construction alliance applauds Toronto's automated water meter program

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Toronto's new automated water meter program is a start to achieving the operational efficiencies in water management the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario has consistently lobbied for.

"We have been saying to Toronto and other municipalities that if they do not measure it (water use) you will not be able to use water more efficiently," said Andy Manahan, executive director of RCCAO.

"The fact they will use these automated meters and focus them on households and businesses that do not have meters at all is a terrific start."

Toronto has just launched its automated water meter program which hopes to install or replace the meter in every home and business in Toronto — about 465,000 meters — over the next six years. The plan initially targets businesses and the 72,000 households who pay a flat rate for water and don't currently have a meter.

"We strive to continually improve on the way we provide water services. These new meters will help us to provide these services in a more efficient way," said Lou Di Gironimo, General Manager of Toronto Water, in statement.

"Under the new system, we will be able to detect water loss in the system, such as leaks, pipe breaks and open hydrants more quickly, which will result in saving water and costs."

An RCCAO study released last year recommended that the province look at return on investments in infrastructure projects and "to include more quantitative, formal and creative analysis of sustainability impacts and benefits."

Among that study's findings was that Toronto spends \$2 million per month to energize its water distribution system, a figure that hits close to \$5 million for the whole province.

For some systems, up to 50 per cent of energy use may be reduced by confronting and controlling the various sources of energy inefficiency.

Also, a number of municipalities had water leakage rates of 25 per cent.

"Those leakage rates are a waste of valuable treated water and if we do not start plugging those leaks, we will have environmental consequences and waste of taxpayer dollars," said Manahan.

"The water meters are a great step to plug the leaks and incorporate a better system approach."

As water-tight pipes deteriorate, this leads to higher water losses causing higher water pumping levels. Through this diminished performance water distribution pumping costs rise and more energy is used.

The automated water meters are a step in helping to gauge the health of the city's water system, city officials

said.

The new meters will securely transmit data remotely to data collection units across the city, which then securely transmit to a central database, almost eliminating the need for city staff to enter people's homes to obtain a water meter reading.

"The new meters will also help to improve water conservation, save in operational costs, and ensure fair and equitable billing for every Toronto Water customer," the city said in a statement.