

## Update on Prior Years' Report Items

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### 3.2.21 Disinfection Assistance Program (2003 Annual Report, Part 2.31)

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#### Introduction

In 2003, we performed a review of the Disinfection Assistance Program administered by the then Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

In June 2000, the Department of Health and Community Services introduced new Microbiological Water Quality Standards as a result of concerns around the quality of drinking water in the Province. As a result of the new standards, there was an immediate increase in the number of boil water advisories in the Province.

In the 2001-02 Budget Speech it was announced that a Safe Drinking Water Initiative would be undertaken to assist municipalities under boil water advisories by providing 100% funding up to a maximum of \$100,000 for the installation or upgrading of water disinfection systems. As a result, a multi-year Disinfection Assistance Program at the then Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs was introduced.

Our objective was to determine whether the then Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs was adequately managing the Disinfection Assistance Program.

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#### Conclusions from our 2003 review

As a result of our review, we concluded that the Department was not complying with program guidelines. Specifically:

- 5 municipalities were approved for funding totaling approximately \$1.2 million even though they were not subject to a boil water advisory.
  - 53 municipalities were approved for full funding in excess of the \$100,000 limit.
  - 6 municipalities were approved for funding totaling approximately \$1.2 million for more than one project.
  - 3 municipalities were approved for funding of approximately \$94,000 for ineligible projects.
  - Project files did not always contain the required signed documents from the municipality.
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### Update

In October 2005, we contacted the Department of Municipal Affairs requesting an update as to the progress on the comments and recommendation included in our 2003 report. The information provided by the Department in response to our request is outlined below.

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#### **2003 Recommendation**

*The Department should comply with its guidelines for the Disinfection Assistance Program.*

#### **Action Taken**

The Department indicated that it makes every effort to comply with the guidelines. It was noted that the Disinfection Assistance Program no longer exists; however, funding is still being provided for projects that were previously approved under this initiative. Funding for new municipal chlorination projects are extended through the ongoing Municipal Infrastructure Program.

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### **3.2.22 Special Assistance (2003 Annual Report, Part 2.33)**

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#### **Introduction**

In 2003, we performed a review of special assistance at the then Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs. The special assistance program is intended to provide grants to municipalities to assist them in dealing with emergencies of a health and/or life safety nature, general emergencies, and other initiatives as well as to assist municipalities which are experiencing financial difficulties. For the year ended 31 March 2003, expenditures for special assistance to municipalities and other entities totaled \$5.9 million. The objective of our review was to determine whether the Department was administering special assistance for purposes authorized by the Legislature and in accordance with Program Guidelines.

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