

Ministry of the Environment,
Conservation and Parks

Environmental Assessment
Modernization Branch

135 St. Clair Avenue West
4th Floor
Toronto ON M4V 1P5

Ministère de l'Environnement, de
la Protection de la nature et des Parcs

Direction de la modernisation des processus
d'évaluation environnementale

135, avenue St. Clair Ouest
4^e étage
Toronto ON M4V 1P5



February 16, 2024

Greetings,

The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (ministry) continues to take action to modernize Ontario's environmental assessment (EA) program.

Building on our [spring 2023 proposal](#) to evaluate environmental assessment (EA) requirements for municipal infrastructure projects, I would like to inform you about a new proposal arising out of the spring proposal. This new proposal is to revoke the Municipal Class EA and make a regulation under the *Environmental Assessment Act* that will clearly identify which municipal infrastructure projects are subject to the streamlined EA process and the process they must follow. This approach will help us eliminate unnecessary burden on lower-impact projects and reduce duplicative requirements.

As you may be aware, Ontario has been working to modernize its almost 50-year-old environmental assessment program since 2019. We have been working to make changes that will reduce delays on infrastructure projects that matter most to Ontario communities, while maintaining appropriate environmental oversight and consultation opportunities.

In July 2020, Ontario amended the *Environmental Assessment Act* (EA Act) to enable moving to a project list approach. To fully implement these changes, regulations are needed to list projects subject to comprehensive EA (i.e. Part II.3 projects), list projects subject to streamlined EA regulation requirements (Part II.4 projects), and set out the streamlined EA process for Part II.4 projects. The streamlined EA project list and process regulations will eventually replace the current complex system of class environmental assessments that apply to certain types of projects. It is the ministry's vision that the modernized streamlined regulations will eliminate duplication and provide clear expectations regarding consultation and defined timelines while maintaining environmental protections.

Implementation of the 2020 EA Act amendments started with the proposal for projects that will be subject to comprehensive (Part II.3) EA requirements, which remains under consideration. The new proposal is premised on the comprehensive EA project list proposal being implemented, and the relevant EA Act amendments proclaimed into force.

The ministry is seeking your feedback as we develop the first of the streamlined EA project lists and process regulations. The proposed regulation would set out municipal infrastructure projects undertaken by municipalities, that will be subject to the new Part

11.4 of the amended Act. These projects would be required to undertake a streamlined EA process set out in the regulation (the proposed Municipal Project Assessment Process (MPAP)).

The proposed streamlined MPAP would be a time-limited process. The proposed regulation would create a six-month timeline for the process. The regulation would be accompanied by guidance for proponents of projects subject to the new regulation. The guidance would help Indigenous communities and the public understand the process and how to get involved in a project.

For more information about this proposal, please visit <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-7891>. Please note that the comment period ends on March 17, 2024.

Please do not hesitate to contact the ministry's EA Modernization team at EAmmodernization.mecp@ontario.ca with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Cross". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Annamaria Cross
Director, Environmental Assessment Modernization Branch
Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks