

Memorandum to the Council of Corporation of the Municipality of Temagami

Subject: Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Inspection and Decontamination Program

Memo No: 2025-M-064

Date: March 13, 2025

Attachment: Appendix A - Motion for AIS Inspection and Decontamination Program

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Recommendation

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receives Memo 2025-M-064 as presented;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Council pass the attached motion (Appendix A – attached hereto as part of this report) urging the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and the Ministry of Transportation to establish an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program, similar to Manitoba’s, to protect lakes in Northeastern Ontario.

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Executive Summary

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) pose a serious threat to Ontario's lakes, impacting biodiversity, fisheries, and recreational activities. Unlike Manitoba, Ontario does not have a mandatory AIS inspection or decontamination program. Given the rising concern over AIS spread through overland watercraft transport, this report recommends that Council urge the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and the Ministry of Transportation to implement an AIS program similar to Manitoba's.

The proposed program would establish mandatory watercraft inspection and decontamination stations at key rest stops, such as Marten River, to prevent the introduction of invasive species into local lakes. This initiative aligns with best practices and aims to protect the ecological and economic value of Ontario's waterways.

There is no immediate financial impact on the Municipality, as funding sources can be explored if the program is adopted at the provincial level. The motion, if approved, will be forwarded to relevant ministries, municipalities, and advocacy groups for support and lobbying efforts.

Background

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) threaten the ecological balance of Ontario's lakes, impacting biodiversity, local fisheries, and recreational activities. The introduction of invasive species can result in environmental and economic damage, negatively impacting biodiversity, local fisheries, and recreational activities. Currently, Ontario has no mandatory watercraft inspection or decontamination requirements to prevent the spread of AIS, although voluntary guidelines encourage boaters to clean, drain, and dry their watercraft before moving between water bodies.

The Province of Manitoba operates a comprehensive AIS watercraft inspection program, requiring all motorized and non-motorized watercraft - such as canoes, kayaks, fishing boats, Jet Skis®, paddleboards, and water-related equipment - to stop at designated stations for assessment and, if necessary, decontamination. This program runs annually from late spring through mid-fall and has proven effective in mitigating AIS spread.

Analysis

- Overland transportation of watercraft is the primary vector for AIS spread in North America. Without proper inspections and decontamination, AIS can invade previously unaffected lakes.
- Ontario is currently developing several new rest stops along key Northern Ontario highways but has not included AIS wash stations within their plans.
- Implementing an AIS program similar to Manitoba's, which has successfully reduced AIS spread through mandatory watercraft inspections and decontamination stations, would significantly lower the risk of invasive species entering local lakes.
- Designating select rest stops, such as Marten River, as AIS inspection and decontamination stations presents a practical and efficient solution.

Financial Impact

There is no immediate financial impact on the Municipality. Should the Province implement an AIS inspection program, funding opportunities and cost-sharing mechanisms may be explored to support municipal execution.

Communications Plan

If approved, the resolution will be forwarded to:

- Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
- Ministry of Transportation
- Other municipalities along Highway 11 for support
- Federation of Northern Municipalities for lobbying efforts
- Premier Doug Ford, requesting provincial backing

Conclusion

Given the growing concern over AIS and the proven success of Manitoba's program, implementing a similar initiative in Ontario is a necessary step toward preserving aquatic ecosystems, local economies, and recreational waters. Council's support for this resolution will advocate for a proactive, province-led AIS prevention program to protect Ontario's lakes for future generations.

Appendix A

Motion to Initiate the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Inspection and Decontamination Program

WHEREAS there is a growing concern among residents of the Municipality of Temagami regarding the significant risk of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) being introduced into local lakes by boats arriving from high-risk areas without appropriate inspection and decontamination;

AND WHEREAS Ontario currently has no mandatory inspection or decontamination requirements in place to prevent the spread of AIS;

AND WHEREAS it is well documented that the overland movement of watercraft and water-related equipment is the primary vector for transporting AIS to uninvaded water bodies in North America;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba operates an annual AIS watercraft inspection program from late spring through the middle of fall, requiring all motorized and non-motorized watercraft to stop at designated inspection stations for assessment and potential decontamination;

AND WHEREAS the Manitoba program applies to a broad range of watercraft, including canoes, kayaks, fishing boats, sailboats, personal watercraft (Jet Ski®), stand-up paddleboards (SUPs), and any water-related equipment that has come into contact with a water body;

AND WHEREAS the Manitoba government's AIS Regulation under The Water Protection Act mandates decontamination procedures at designated sites strategically located along highways and other key locations to prevent the spread of AIS;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Ontario is currently developing several new rest stops along key Northern Ontario highways but has not included AIS wash stations within their mandate;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Municipality of Temagami calls upon the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Transportation to establish an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program similar to Manitoba's, to protect lakes in Northeastern Ontario;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Province of Ontario be urged to designate select new rest stop locations, such as Marten River, as sites for AIS inspection and decontamination stations;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this resolution be circulated to other municipalities along Highway 11, as they are directly affected by watercraft movement and share similar concerns regarding the introduction of AIS, for their support and endorsement;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this resolution be forwarded to the Federation of Northern Municipalities, requesting their advocacy to ensure the protection of lakes within their jurisdiction;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this resolution be sent to Premier Doug Ford, requesting his support and collaboration with the relevant Ministries to implement this program.