

# Understanding the Limitations on Hauled Septage Disposal Sites in Ontario



# Summary of Discussion



Definition of Municipal Waste as per Ontario Regulation 347 of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA)



Zoning Issues and Concerns



Challenges Faced by Homeowners in Municipalities during Plant Upgrades and Maintenance



OASIS's Efforts to Promote Awareness and Proper Waste Disposal



Providing Solutions and Recommendations to Municipalities



Final Thoughts



# About OASIS

OASIS was established in 1991 to support and represent businesses in the septic, portable toilet and biosolid land application industry. We are dedicated to working with various levels of government, associations and those in related fields to improve and conform to regulations and guidelines pertaining to the sustainability of the environment in the Province of Ontario.



# OASIS Strives



To maintain and promote the highest standards of safety, environmental responsibility, regulatory compliance and environmental due diligence.



To institute open forum discussions regarding operational challenges, implementation of maintenance protocols, employee development, administrative practices, and operator safety programs.



To act as a liaison between several tiers of government and Ministries while representing the interests of the industry with legislative recommendations.



To promote uniformity and consistency throughout the industry.

# Overall Concern

In Ontario, the lack of proper disposal of septage and septic waste to approved municipal wastewater plants including Ministry of Environment approved wastewater lagoons and field spreading sites poses significant challenges and concerns. This issue encompasses a range of environmental, public health, and regulatory factors that need to be addressed for the well-being of communities across the province.



# Lack of Hauled Septage Disposal Sites in Ontario

Proper disposal of septage and septic waste is essential to ensure public health and protect the environment. When septage is not disposed of correctly, it can contaminate water sources, posing risks to human health and ecosystems. Approved municipal wastewater plants play a crucial role in treating and managing septage to mitigate these risks.

- One of the primary challenges arising from the lack of proper disposal is the contamination of water sources. Improperly disposed septage and septic waste can seep into groundwater, lakes, rivers, and other water bodies, polluting them with harmful bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens. This contamination not only endangers the health of those who rely on these water sources for drinking, swimming, or recreational purposes but also harms aquatic life and ecosystems.

**Municipal Concern:** The call to escalate residential construction has raised significant concerns, particularly regarding waste management. It is impossible to intensify home construction without considering how the resulting waste will be effectively handled. This includes not only domestic garbage waste, which may be directed to landfills, but also septic waste, whether through sewers or hauled septage.

# Misconception and Concerns

Ministry of Environment driven studies in partnership with OASIS have shown that application of hauled septage on agricultural properties is a safe and beneficial when completed in accordance with Ministry guidelines. This practice provides effective use of important nutrients. This practise also has been utilized for centuries with the application of manure as a common agricultural practise.

Lack of disposal sites for septic systems poses concerns for the Environment causing homeowners to “take matters into their own hands” if proper disposal facilities are not available.



# Definition of “Municipal Waste”

Under Ontario Regulation 347 of the Environmental Protection Act:

Municipal Waste: Refers to waste generated by households, commercial establishments, and institutions within a municipality. It includes both solid and liquid waste, such as septage, septic waste, and other forms of non-hazardous waste.

- Point of Consideration: Household garbage generated in the municipality is the responsibility of the municipality to dispose and manage.



# Volume of Hauled Septage Managed

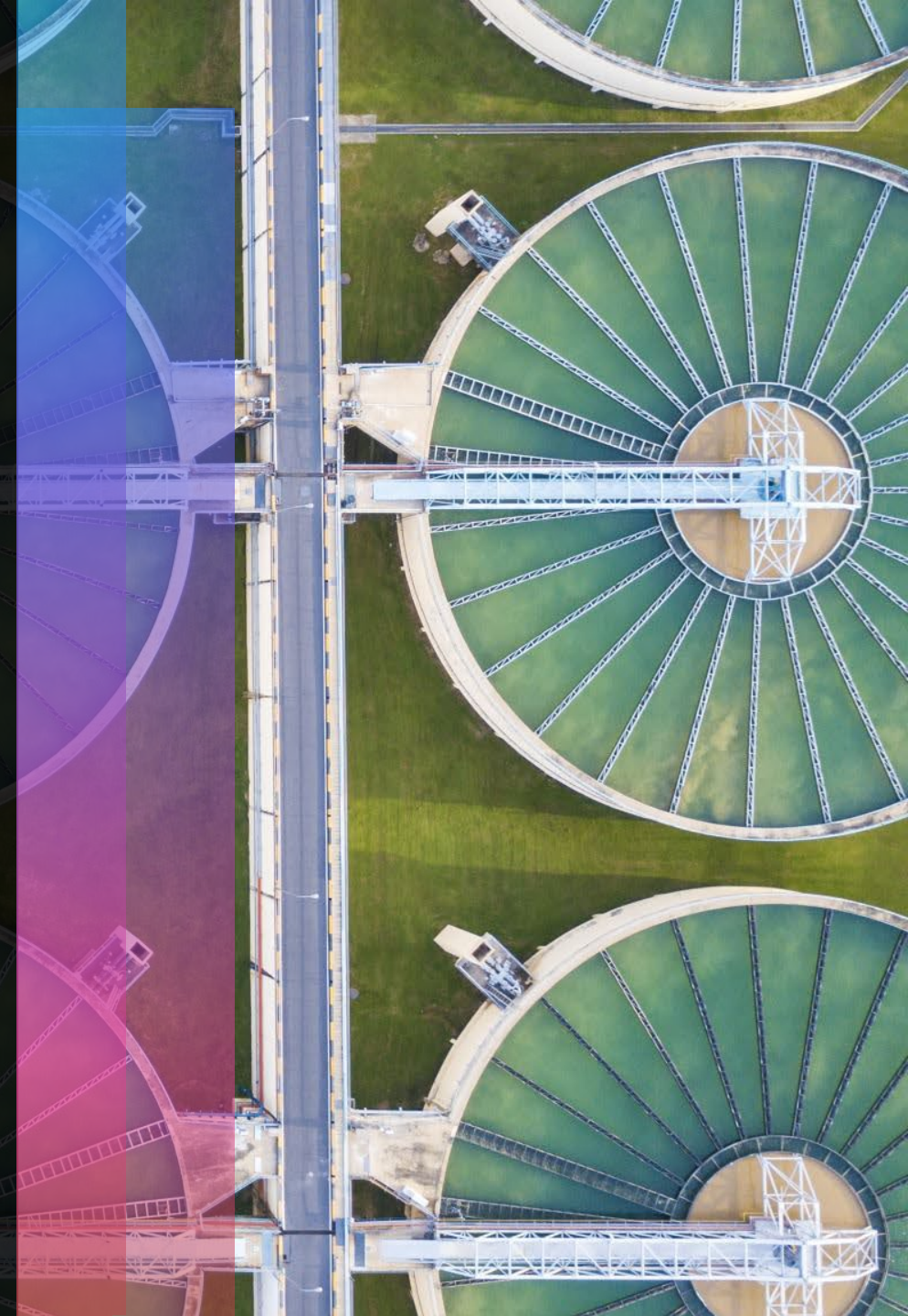
OASIS Members service a wide range of areas and manage a total estimated volume of over 210 million gallons on a yearly basis servicing only Ontario residents.

Northern Ontario: 25-45 million gallons

Central Ontario: 45-75 million gallons

Eastern Ontario: 35-55 million gallons

Western Ontario: 30-35 million gallons



# Municipal Zoning

- Existing agricultural zoning designation already takes into account the specific characteristics and requirements of farming activities. These designations are typically established based on extensive research, land suitability assessments, and community development plans. Agricultural land also requires and uses many of the required nutrients provided by the septage being spread.
- MECP monitors these sites very closely with quarterly and annual reports from the operators of these sites to ensure compliance and no regulatory limits are breached. By recognizing the multifunctionality of agriculturally zoned land and its ability to accommodate spreading activities, municipalities can ensure that land-use regulations align with the intended purposes while minimizing the need for rezoning.
- Municipalities must comprehend the fact that operators within their townships who possess or acquire property do not always require rezoning. Agriculturally zoned properties can serve as effective spaces for spreading activities, enhancing soil fertility and resource utilization. Rezoning such properties to a "Commercial/Industrial" zoning category needlessly decreases the land's value and is often unwarranted.



# Municipal Challenges

- Many rural housing, community centers, municipal buildings are on septic systems and do not have a common municipal wastewater treatment plant to manage the septage produced in the respective municipality
- When municipalities decide to upgrade or perform maintenance on their wastewater treatment plants, the limited availability of disposal sites poses significant challenges for homeowners.
- Proper disposal becomes even more critical during these periods, as the capacity of approved facilities may be temporarily reduced or eliminated
- Septic Haulers are providing a service to homeowners to help effectively and safely manage the septage produced in their residence or facility
- **Misconception**: When a homeowner requires a septic to be emptied the responsibility does NOT fall entirely on the septic operator to dispose the waste. Municipalities need to provide the infrastructure/resources to dispose of the waste produced in their municipality properly and safely.

# Raising Awareness

As a proactive organization, OASIS is committed to creating awareness and encouraging proper waste disposal practices. The association aims to foster an open and transparent dialogue among various stakeholders, including homeowners, municipalities, regulatory bodies, and industry professionals, to address the challenges associated with septage and septic waste disposal.

Municipal Approval: Providing companies the ability to apply and provide Ministry approved and monitored disposal sites is a viable and effective option in the event municipal wastewater infrastructures are not available or provide the capacity required to manage the waste produced in their respective municipalities.

These include but not limited to:

- Ministry of Environment approved wastewater lagoons with the option of introducing alternative wastewater management technologies
- Field Spreading sites



# Offering Solutions and Resources

OASIS actively engages with municipalities, conducting workshops, seminars, and public awareness campaigns to educate policy makers about the importance of proper waste disposal. By fostering open communication channels, OASIS encourages dialogue between all stakeholders, facilitating the sharing of knowledge, best practices, and innovative solutions.

To address the limitations in disposal sites and support municipalities in managing septage and septic waste effectively, OASIS offers solutions and recommendations. These may include advocating for the development of additional approved disposal sites, promoting advanced treatment technologies, and collaborating with relevant authorities to streamline waste management processes. OASIS strives to provide municipalities with the necessary tools and guidance to ensure responsible septage management within their jurisdictions.

# Action Items

## OASIS would like to propose the following action items:

1. A copy of this presentation along with the formal letter submitted by OASIS to be sent to all levels of Municipal Governments across the Province including but not limited to the various Provincial Ministries including the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks and The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and all other relevant parties.
2. OASIS be involved in discussions and communications pertaining to the discussed issue to help provide recommendations and solutions to help mitigate the issues surrounding approved disposal sites
3. Allow OASIS to communicate directly with other Municipalities in the Province of Ontario to allow for a open, transparent and collaborative dialogue with other stakeholders



# Final Thoughts



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