

A Call to Action to the Residents of Niagara by the Heavy Construction Association of Regional Niagara

As our commercial message says "There's more to be done....."

The Association members are concerned about how we're protecting our families and community from water pollution and contamination.

In Niagara we have something called "combined sewer overflows". These are a mixture of storm water, raw sewage and scoured sewer sediments. These systems are sewers that are designed to collect rainwater runoff, domestic sewage, and industrial wastewater in the same pipe.

Most of the time, combined sewer systems transport all of their wastewater to a sewage treatment plant, where it is treated and then discharged to a water body. During periods of heavy rainfall or snowmelt, however, the wastewater volume in a combined sewer system can exceed the capacity of the sewer system or treatment plant. For this reason, combined sewer systems are designed to overflow occasionally and discharge excess wastewater directly to nearby streams, rivers, or other water bodies.

These overflows, contain not only storm water but also untreated human and industrial waste, toxic materials, and debris. They are a major water pollution concern.

While these are designed to be a "safety valve" that prevents back-ups of untreated wastewater into homes and businesses, flooding in city streets, or bursting underground pipes; combined sewer overflows and storm water discharges are one of the primary causes of beach closures in Niagara. Human health can be affected by these discharges through contamination of drinking water sources, fish and shellfish, and recreational water.

The good news is municipal governments of Niagara have increased infrastructure spending from \$64 million annually in 2000 to an estimated \$150 million annually in 2005. But their work isn't finished. Your municipal government needs to make sewage overflow a top priority for 2007 and beyond.

The Association urges all of you to contact your local or regional municipal administrators and those currently running for municipal office and ask them what they are planning to do about this issue.

Regularly Check This Website for Important Updates.....such as the results of the Candidates Infrastructure Questionnaire posted on this website