



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

23 September 2014

Are you septic system savvy?

Over a million Ontario households rely on septic systems to treat their wastewater. If yours is one of them, congratulations - it's [Septic Smart Week](#), time to think about this important but often neglected element of your home. Fill in a quick online survey at www.tinyurl.com/septicsurvey for a chance to win \$500 for system maintenance.

An estimated 25% of septic systems across the province are beyond their 30-year design life and failing to protect ground and surface water, the source of our drinking water.

As noted by Terry Rees of the [Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations](#), "Septics are certainly a key piece of infrastructure for Ontario's 250,000 waterfront property owners."

Working with provincial partners, [Green Communities Canada](#) is conducting a survey to identify the types of systems in use, how they are used, maintained, repaired, and replaced, and how people make decisions about their systems.

Meanwhile, you can take action during Septic Smart Week to make sure your system is in good order:

- have a licensed technician inspect the system, pump out the tank, and install an effluent filter
- remind your household to avoid putting anything down the drain that may interfere with the system (e.g., coffee grounds, food scraps, and, tampons, applicators, flushable wipes, condoms, antibacterials, and solvents)
- remind everyone to conserve water – large volumes can overload the system and cause failure

Septic system construction is regulated under the Building Code, but maintenance, including pumping and inspection, is a homeowner responsibility. Some regions have mandatory septic inspections every five years by the municipality or conservation authority, and some have grants to help property owners conduct necessary repairs and upgrades, but these are variable across the province.

This survey is anonymous. Results will inform the development of a program to help raise awareness and engage rural homeowners in septic system maintenance, upgrades, and repairs in order to protect their drinking water, property values, and the environment.

The survey, the first of its kind ever conducted across Ontario, is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs, and will only be available until 30 September 2014.

Survey link: www.tinyurl.com/septicsurvey

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