

## Geography 4411 - Assignment 2

### Water Resource Implications of the Walkerton Tragedy

#### Assignment To be done individually

An estimated 2,300 people became seriously ill and seven died from exposure to microbially contaminated drinking water in the town of Walkerton, Ontario, Canada in May 2000. The severity of this drinking water disaster resulted in the Government of Ontario calling a public inquiry by Mr. Justice Dennis O'Connor to address the cause of the outbreak, the role (if any) of government policies in contributing to this outbreak and, ultimately, the implications of this experience on the safety of drinking water across the Province of Ontario. The circumstances surrounding the Walkerton tragedy are an important reference source for those concerned with providing safe drinking water. Although some circumstances are obviously specific to this epidemic, others are uncomfortably reminiscent of waterborne outbreaks that have occurred elsewhere. These recurring themes suggested the need for attention to broad issues of drinking water security and they present the challenge for how drinking water safety can be managed to prevent such tragedies in the future. (Hrudey et al., 2003)

#### *Your task*

1. Gather appropriate academic and government sources surrounding the case of drinking water contamination in Walkerton.
2. Write a concise, two-paged paper (single spaced; 12 point font; times font) that focuses on one of the key faults in the management system that resulted in 7 people dying from drinking water. Comment on how this case in particular has drawn a new awareness to Canadian drinking water policy

(i.e. Focus the paper on a specific problem, procedure, management issue or policy that failed in preventing the Walkerton tragedy and I encourage your focus on the most profound aspect of the case)

Before You Begin: Read the Following article and News Releases as initial background

1. Hrudey, 2002. "Walkerton: Lessons learned in comparison with waterborne outbreaks in the developed world". 10th National Conference on Drinking Water. (*attached*)
2. Mackay, B. 2002. Walkerton, 2 Years Later: "Memory fades very quickly". *Canadian Medical Association*. 166(10) (*attached*)
3. Ritter, L. et al., 2002. 'Sources, Pathways, and Relative Risks of Contaminants in Surface Water and Groundwater' *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health, Part A*, 65(1): 142-143

**Marking Scheme (20 marks = 10% of Final Grade)**

**Comment on implications to Canada's drinking water policy (5 marks):**

**Personal Input/Comment on One particular Implication (5 marks)**

**Use of Referenced Information (5 marks):**

**Concise Report / Grammar / Spelling (3 marks)**

**Reference list (2 marks):** *AT LEAST* 5 references should be explored, and *ALL* should be drawn from academic journals. You may use the Hrudey article attached as 1 of your academic journal requirements.