



## Accessing Information on Ontario's Environmental Registry

### What information does the Registry provide?

The Environmental Registry, provided through the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR), is a publicly accessible Internet database of important proposals related to environmental decision-making by most Ontario government ministries. [Thirteen provincial ministries](#) must use the Registry to notify you of their [proposals](#) and [decisions](#) regarding [policies](#), [Acts](#), [instruments](#), or [regulations](#) that could significantly affect the environment. Whether the ministries are proposing new ones, planning to change existing ones, or considering eliminating any, they must notify you on the Registry and invite your comments. This includes consideration and approval of permits given to allow polluting activities, typically known as Certificates of Approval.

### How do I access information on the Registry?

The Environmental Registry can be found at:

[http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env\\_reg/eb/english/index.htm](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env_reg/eb/english/index.htm). The Registry is fairly straightforward to search. There are choices on the search page so that you can define what type of information you want. You can search by:

- Word or phrase
- Company name
- The type of decision/instrument you are looking for – i.e. Certificates of Approval
- The date the proposal and/or decision was loaded onto the Registry

Please note that it is very difficult to search based on location on the Registry.

### What information does the Registry leave out?

Often minimal information about a proposal/instrument is posted on the registry. The individual Ministries have more comprehensive information that is supposed to be available to the public, but Ministries often inappropriately require separate Freedom of Information requests to access it. According to the Environmental Bill of Rights office, a Freedom of Information request is not required to access this information. It should be made available to you if you contact the relevant Government office.

Not all Ministries that are subject to the Environmental Bill of Rights are subject to each part of EBR. In addition, for most proposals on the Registry, Ministries are required to provide only a minimum level of public participation.

### Why is the Registry useful?

The information on the Registry is useful for finding out about what companies in your area are planning to do - for example, are they applying to take water from a lake or applying for a new permit? It is also useful for monitoring government decisions and making comments on applications posted on the Registry.

### What has the Registry been used for in the past?

Concerned citizens and non-government organizations have used the Registry to make comments on, support or oppose proposals which are then approved, altered or rejected by the ministry in consideration of public comments. For example, public comments on the Registry regarding a proposal for new recreational developments in Bronte Creek Provincial Park led to significant changes in the plans. The Ministry of Natural Resources reduced the park's proposed development zone by 20 per cent, and increased the nature reserve zone from 18 per cent to 25 per cent. The area set aside for natural restoration in the northern part of the park was more than doubled in size, and the proposed campground was reduced from 500 sites to 400.

### For more information:

Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights and You. Environmental Commissioner of Ontario (2003). Retrieved January 19, 2006 from: [www.eco.on.ca](http://www.eco.on.ca)