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Hon. Andrea Khanjin
Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
College Park 5th Flr, 777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

July 15, 2024

Dear Minister Khanjin,

I am writing to you in support of Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health's (WDGPH) call for continued funding for the provincial wastewater surveillance system.

As outlined by WDGPH's letter, Ontario's surveillance system covers more than 60% of the population, one of the highest in North America. This program has become a vital tool for tracking infectious disease threats in Ontario, not only for COVID but also influenza, RSV, polio and others.

WDGPH emphasizes that this program allows public health units to accurately predict and understand disease conditions within their region that impact public health concerns. The wastewater surveillance program has helped to foster a coordinated network across Ontario and has provided valuable data on local respiratory illnesses. AS WDGPH states, currently there is no better surveillance tool to give public health a profound picture of these illnesses.

During COVID-19, we learnt the importance of preparedness and prevention. The wastewater surveillance provides innovative approaches to monitor respiratory illness as well as understanding other emerging diseases vital for robust public health decisions.

Therefore, I encourage your ministry to continue funding wastewater surveillance. It is our responsibility to protect the health and well-being of all Ontarians and this includes continuous testing and monitoring of respiratory illnesses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mike Schreiner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mike Schreiner
MPP, Guelph