

# Tighten drinking water controls in Ontario, New Democrat says

By Bob Mitchell Toronto Star

Ontario residents deserve better protection for their drinking water, says a New Democrat MPP who has introduced a private member's bill calling for stricter controls.

As part of the NDP's nine-point program to clean up the Great Lakes, environment critic Ruth Grier last week introduced the Ontario Safe Drinking Water Act in the Legislature.

The private bill, which would allow residents to sue for damages, calls for tougher adherence to water quality and a \$50,000 fine for contravention.

"Right now, there are no standards in Ontario for the amount of chemical contaminants in our

drinking water," Grier told The Star yesterday.

"The province does a good job on monitoring bacteria levels that cause typhus and diphtheria, but nothing about chemical contaminants."

If adopted by David Peterson's Liberal government, Grier says, the legislation would force the upgrading of water filtration plants because it gives residents the right to sue for damages if water suppliers don't take action, or neglect to warn people about high levels of contaminants.

Metro would also be required to regularly monitor drinking water and give immediate public notification if the level of permissible contaminants exceeded a specific safe level.