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## Cash flows into river

### Feds devote further \$13M to cleanup waterway days before election call

By **DEREK PUDDICOMBE, CITY HALL BUREAU**

The federal government is handing over another \$13 million to help fix the city's sewer problem.

Environment Minister John Baird stood on the sands of Petrie Island Beach yesterday afternoon and announced an additional \$13 million in federal cash -- on top of \$20 million the feds have already promised -- to help solve the city's ongoing sewage-spill problem.

"People across our city have said loud and clear that dumping raw sewage into a national treasure like the Ottawa River just isn't acceptable in this day and age," said Baird.

The announcement comes days before Prime Minister Stephen Harper is expected to call a federal election for Oct. 14.

#### RAW SEWAGE

In August 2006, a billion litres of raw sewage spilled into the river and went unreported to the Ontario environment ministry after a city sewer regulator jammed for two weeks.

Baird thought it was appropriate to return to the "scene of the crime" to make the funding announcement that he will make official when he signs the papers before an election call that will guarantee the promise won't be scuttled.

He wants \$3 million of that money to go directly to a \$19-million city sewer project to install real time controls that will replace five antiquated mechanical regulators that have been malfunctioning over the years and responsible for the repeated dumping of raw sewage into the Ottawa River.

"The city cannot be expected to financially deal with it alone," he said.

Baird said he has been working closely with Alta Vista Coun. Peter Hume whom he considers his political counterpart at the city. Hume also chairs the city's planning and environment committee.

The money will come from the government's multi-billion-dollar Canada Build Fund and the city won't have to apply for the money.

#### 'SHOULDN'T HAVE TO WAIT'

"The city shouldn't have to wait for it," said Baird.

Mayor Larry O'Brien said the money will go a long way to helping the city.

"The City of Ottawa has already begun by funding \$19 million to the Real Time Control project to ensure no accidental spillage happens again," he said.

Three east-end councillors said the money is welcome.

"It behooves the city to match the money and that the waterway gets the best treatment it deserves," said



**Environment Minister John Baird and Ottawa-Orleans MP Royal Gallipeau walk along the beach at Petrie Island yesterday after announcing an additional \$13 million in federal funding to help clean up the Ottawa River and protect it from sewage overflows. (Ryan Holland/Special to Sun Media)**

Innes Coun. Rainer Bloess.

The city has since acknowledged nine more spills have occurred and gone unreported to the ministry in the past few years.

The city faces charges from the Ontario government and is waiting for the results of a federal and two municipal investigations.