

### Executive Summary

The Precautionary Principle emerged as the German foresight principle Vorsorgeprinzip in the 1970s and later evolved into a fundamental principle of German environmental law with the intention being to avoid environmental damage by careful forward planning (Harremoës, et al., 2002). Although there is currently no generally accepted definition of the Precautionary Principle, it is a proactive and ethical principle that can be construed to mean that if an action or policy is suspected to cause harm to the public or to the environment lack of scientific consensus shall not be used as a reason to allow the action or policy to move forward. The Precautionary Principle has been cited in several significant international conferences and decisions, and is employed in many fields of practice. However, the Precautionary Principle has never been explicitly linked to the land use planning profession.

This research is relevant to the land use planning practice because the researcher argues that there are two purposes for land use planning in Ontario. The first purpose is to develop organized and efficient municipalities that meet the needs of the residents that reside in these municipalities. The second purpose, which is explored in this report, is to work towards continual enhancement of land use planning processes to ensure the first purpose is achieved. This research suggests that the precautionary process is embodied in provincial and municipal land use planning processes that have evolved in the province and thus in much of the content of the official and provincial plans, which direct development in each municipality in Ontario.

The researcher hypothesizes that the Precautionary Principle has for a long time been embedded in the land use planning process and more specifically in provincial and municipal planning documents. The purpose of this research is to determine if the Precautionary Principle is in fact embedded in the practice of provincial and municipal land use planning.

The methods used to undertake this research include a literature review and document analysis. The purpose of the literature review was two-fold. The first purpose was to understand the history and context of the Precautionary Principle. The second purpose was to( t)-17b10.9(f)-17-10.5a4fJ 0 Tc 0 Tw

THE APPLICATION OF THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE IN

Table for Determining the Presence and Frequency of the Precautionary Principle in the Official and Provincial Plans

Section #	Section & Subsection Title	# of Policies	Policy Categories
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## THE APPLICATION OF THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE IN THE LAND USE PLANNING PROCESS IN ONTARIO

and latent content analysis. This research finds that there are numerous examples in which the Precautionary Principle appears in the land use planning documents that were reviewed. In fact, the length of each evaluative table indicates that almost every chapter or section of each official and provincial plan has some policy content that relates to the Precautionary Principle. As such, it was determined that land use planning is a very precautionary approach to land management, and it is not solely related to protecting natural heritage features or environmental management. Further, the number of times that the Precautionary Principle is referenced in each official and provincial plan is similar across the plans in that it is relative to the length of each planning document. Many of the policies that relate to potential threats in the two official plans is similar. The differences are mostly a result of varying economic, social and natural environments. Also, much of the content related to uncertainty is latent and is related to land use planning studies.

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