

Natural Resources and Energy (cont.)

The washer and dryer in a laundry room are responsible for a further 12% of home energy use. Operate the washing machine only when it is full and the clothes are truly dirty, not just wrinkled. Use a clothes line or horse to let nature dry wet items. If a dryer must be used, remove and fold the clothes quickly; this helps reduce ironing. The last laundry tip is to only iron what is necessary. Underwear, towels and bed sheets do not need creases!

Every room in a home has some form of lighting. So do most work places. Where possible, replace incandescent bulbs with fluorescent substitutes. Fluorescent tubes use 70% less energy as normal bulbs. One 13 watt tube produces 900 lumens where a 60 watt incandescent bulb produces only 860 lumens.

By affecting the kitchen, laundry room and lighting, one can affect almost three quarters of all the electricity in a home. People living in Ontario should make a special effort to conserve as the province uses more energy, per capita, than any other province or territory; the most wasteful of the wasteful is a disgraceful position. Ontario's Ministry of Environment and Energy has several savings manuals available to the public.

The most precious of all resources is water. It covers nearly 70% of the planet's surface. Human beings are two-thirds water. As rain and snow, H₂O nourishes crops, trees and other vegetation plus restores the levels of lakes and streams. Groundwater allows people and animals to drink while helping irrigation and industry. Surface water, too, provides water to drink but is also home to fish and wildlife and generates hydroelectric power.

Only 3% of all water is fresh. Approximately 80% of this is frozen in glaciers and ice caps. What this means is less than 1% of the planet's total water has the potential for human consumption and 5 billion people must share this tiny amount. Some people must travel miles to get fresh water and survive on only 16 litres per day. Others can say this isn't a problem for them. All the clean, clear water they ever need is right at their finger tips. Just turn on the tap and presto! This attitude is the problem.

About 36 million people and 13,400 manufacturing and industrial plants are located on the Great Lakes drainage basin. The five lakes hold 21% of the Earth's fresh water. Pollution from industrial drainage, sewage plants, storm sewers, agricultural run-off, air borne deposits and other sources, flows into the rivers and streams that empty into the lakes. Because only 1% of the entire basin's volume annually drains out the St. Lawrence River, what ever is put into the water largely stays there. So, under three-quarters of 1% of the entire global population threatens one-fifth of all fresh water due to the "there's plenty more where that came from" attitude.

