

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public Attitude Survey shows high level of awareness of PHAI and Property Radiological Survey

Port Hope, Ont. (April 1, 2015) – Key findings from the 2014 Port Hope Area Initiative (PHAI) Public Attitude Survey reveal that awareness of the PHAI and the Port Hope Project Property Radiological Survey is at an all-time high. The vast majority of residents – 96 per cent – say they have “heard of the Port Hope Area Initiative,” the project for the cleanup and long-term safe management of historic low-level radioactive waste, and 83 per cent – up from 38 per cent in 2011 – are aware of the radiological survey.

This heightened awareness of the property radiological survey comes at a time when more than half of the property owners in urban Port Hope are involved in some aspect of the testing of all 4,800 properties in Ward 1 and a few properties in Ward 2 for the presence of historic low-level radioactive waste.

Marty Kapitan, PHAI manager, legal agreement programs, said public attitude research becomes increasingly important as the testing of Port Hope properties continues to move forward and the planning of major construction activities advances. “The feedback residents provide helps us assess the effectiveness of our communication efforts, improve dialogue with the public and identify areas of concern,” Kapitan said. “Community input is valuable to the project, and we thank everyone who took the time to take part in the survey.”

The random telephone survey was conducted by CCI Research Inc., an independent Canadian research firm, on behalf of the PHAI Management Office. Responses were gathered over a one-month period in fall 2014 from 330 Ward 1 and 141 Ward 2 Port Hope residents. For the first time, residents were asked about their confidence in the PHAI to respond to public concerns. Three-quarters (74 per cent) reported being “very confident” or “confident” that PHAI staff will respond to any concerns they may have.

Other survey findings include:

- 93 per cent of residents reported knowing about the plans to clean up residences and other sites contaminated with historic low-level radioactive waste, while 90 per cent are aware of the plans to transport the waste to the long-term waste management facility
- Satisfaction with living in Port Hope remained strong with 94 per cent indicating they are “very” or “somewhat” satisfied
- Respondents rated PHAI staff (44 per cent) and independent qualified scientists (45 per cent) as their two most trusted sources for providing complete and accurate information about the PHAI
- Three-quarters (75 per cent) of residents are satisfied with the PHAI’s efforts to provide information about the project, while 68 per cent identified newsletters and brochures as their preferred method of receiving project information
- 82 per cent of respondents feel the Port Hope Project Citizen Liaison Group is important in helping with communication between the community and the project
- Asked for the first time what they feel the benefits of the Port Hope Project are, respondents most commonly identified “getting rid of the waste” and “improving the town’s image.”

The confidence interval for the overall Port Hope sample of 471 responses is +/-4.5%, 19 times out of 20. This is the 12th Port Hope Project Public Attitude Survey conducted by the PHAI MO. An executive summary of the 2014 report is available on the PHAI website at www.phai.ca. Copies of the complete survey report are available in print from the PHAI Project Information Exchange at 115 Toronto Road, Port Hope, 905.885.0291, or by email at info@phai.ca.

ABOUT THE PORT HOPE PROJECT

The Port Hope Project involves the construction of a long-term waste management facility and supporting infrastructure for the safe, long-term management of approximately 1.2 million cubic metres of historic low-level radioactive waste. The project entails cleanup of the historic waste from various sites in Port Hope and its long-term maintenance and monitoring in an aboveground engineered mound.

ABOUT THE PHAI

The Port Hope Area Initiative (PHAI) is a federal environmental clean-up program. Its mandate is the remediation and local, long-term, safe management of historic low-level radioactive waste in Port Hope and the Port Granby area of Southeast Clarington. The Port Hope Area Initiative Management Office (PHAI MO), a federal partnership between Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Nuclear Laboratories and Public Works and Government Services Canada, was created to carry out these projects.

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