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First movement of historic waste in Port Hope a reality

Port Hope, ON (December 7, 2017) – The Port Hope Area Initiative (PHAI) cleanup of historic low-level radioactive waste at the legacy Welcome Waste Management Facility in Port Hope began on Dec. 1 with the placement of the first truckloads of contaminated soil into the new engineered aboveground mound. With the first cell of the mound now receiving waste, the cleanup has begun and waste transfer from sites in the rest of the community remains on schedule to begin in 2018.

The legacy facility contains approximately 450,000 cubic metres of waste that was placed at the site in the 1940s and 1950s. It is within the boundaries of the PHAI's new long-term waste management facility, located south of Highway 401 between Baulch Road and Brand Road. Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) is undertaking the PHAI on behalf of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, a federal Crown corporation.

"After more than a decade of planning and project development, the very first load of historic low-level radioactive waste has been placed in safe, long-term storage in Port Hope," said Craig Hebert, General Manager of CNL's Historic Waste Program Management Office. "Our team continues to fulfill Canada's commitment to the community to safely clean up the waste."

With the cell now receiving on-site waste, the cleanup of other sites within the community is on track to start next year. The first off-site waste scheduled to be transported to the new facility will be from the three temporary storage sites in Port Hope. The waste that has been temporarily stored under tarps at the Centre Pier, near the municipal sewage treatment plant and at the Pine Street North Extension in the Highland Drive Landfill area will be safely transported along designated project routes to the new facility. CNL has awarded this contract to Amec Foster Wheeler, an established environmental remediation specialist, with extensive global experience.

"The start of clean-up work represents another significant milestone for the project," said Hebert. "We remain committed to ensuring it is completed safely and efficiently to the benefit of the Port Hope community."

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