



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PHAI Restart Activities

Port Hope, ON (June 15, 2020) – Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) has restarted Port Hope Area Initiative (PHAI) field activities in Port Hope. The PHAI restart plan follows a structured and methodical approach, and requires additional measures for public and worker safety specifically related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures include screening of workers, physical distancing in the field and at offices, sanitization practices for personnel and equipment, and supplementary virus-related personal protective equipment (PPE).

“Our focus is safety - the safety of all the people that work on our sites as well as the residents of the community,” said Scott Parnell, General Manager of CNL’s Port Hope office. “Only work activities that can be done safely, taking into account all COVID-19 related protocols, will be authorized.”

The work is being resumed in four phases, with some activities ramping up more quickly than others. “We have to take a cautious approach,” said Parnell. “It’s not a simple matter of picking up where we left off in March. Our senior management team will approve each step forward when we are satisfied it is the right thing to do.”

The restart of work in each phase is dependent on a number of factors such as COVID-19 statistics in the province and locally, guidance from federal/provincial governments, the willingness of residents to allow CNL and its contractors’ staff on their properties during the pandemic, and CNL’s overall directives.

Like many organizations, CNL and the PHAI activities have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In mid-March, construction and cleanup work in the field, which often requires that a number of people work in close proximity, was suspended until it was safe to begin resuming normal operations. CNL continued essential field work required to keep PHAI sites in a safe condition. The office-based staff continued to work remotely, moving the project forward by progressing remediation designs, and holding meetings with property owners and providing information to other stakeholders by conference calls.

Now, as government and public health pandemic restrictions loosen, the community will see work activities in the field gradually increase over the summer and fall of this year. These activities include completing the restoration of the remediated legacy waste management site in Port Granby, continuing with construction of the engineered aboveground mound at the Port Hope Long-Term Waste Management Facility, and restarting design surveys and cleanup and restoration work at private properties in Port Hope.

CNL had a full construction season of work planned at private properties and municipally owned larger sites this year. “While our project teams are eager to be back in the field, the “new normal” means that some planned work will likely not happen until next construction season,” said Parnell. “However, we are putting significant effort into planning this year’s activities so they can be performed as efficiently as possible while meeting all new safety requirements.”

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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. Canadian Nuclear Laboratories is implementing these projects through its Historic Waste Program Management Office on behalf of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, a federal Crown corporation.

ABOUT THE PORT HOPE PROJECT

The Port Hope Project involves the construction of an engineered aboveground mound and supporting infrastructure for the safe, long-term management of approximately 1.2 million cubic metres of historic low-level radioactive waste, cleanup of the waste from various sites in Port Hope and its transportation to the waste management facility, located south of Highway 401 and west of Baulch Road. Ongoing maintenance and monitoring will continue for hundreds of years after the facility is capped and closed. The historic waste resulted from radium and uranium refining and processing operations of the former Crown corporation, Eldorado Nuclear, and its private sector predecessors, which operated from the 1930s to 1988.

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