

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Another Step Forward for the Port Hope Project

Port Hope, Ont. (April 7, 2010) – The Port Hope Area Initiative Management Office (PHAI MO) is pleased to announce that another milestone has been achieved for the Port Hope Project with the assumption of responsibility for the operations of the existing Welcome Waste Management Facility.

In granting a Waste Nuclear Substance Licence to Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) in October 2009, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC), which has nuclear regulatory oversight of the PHAI MO's ongoing operations, authorized AECL to assume responsibility for the Welcome Waste Management Facility (WMF). Coincident with this, the licence previously held by Cameco Corporation for the Welcome WMF has been revoked. Following several months of preparations, the PHAI MO has assumed responsibility for the operations of the Welcome WMF and the Government of Canada has acquired the 55-hectare site from Cameco. Signs will be posted at the Welcome WMF that identify AECL as the licensee and provide contact numbers for information and emergencies.

"The assumption of responsibility for the Welcome Facility is another milestone as we continue to work towards our goal of overseeing the successful remediation and safe, long-term storage of Port Hope's historic low-level radioactive waste," says Christine Fahey, Project Director, PHAI MO.

In the coming months, the PHAI MO will continue to work with its contractors to develop the detailed design for the engineered mound that will be constructed on the site of the Welcome WMF to store approximately 1.2 million cubic metres of historic low-level radioactive waste, which includes approximately 500,000 cubic metres that is stored at the existing facility, with the remainder to be remediated from various sites in the Municipality of Port Hope. Construction on the Welcome WMF is expected to begin in 2012, subject to AECL receiving all relevant approvals.

Fahey adds: "Through the PHAI MO, AECL is committed to the safe operations of the Welcome WMF, both now and in the future. Our staff has worked with their colleagues at Cameco to ensure that the change in responsibility takes place as seamlessly as possible."

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ABOUT THE PHAI MO

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Demolition Work to Begin on Toronto Road Properties

Port Hope, Ont. (January 15, 2010) – The Port Hope Area Initiative Management Office (PHAI MO) wants to inform local residents that demolition work is expected to begin during the week of January 18, 2010 on several buildings located at 192 Toronto Road and 196 Toronto Road in Port Hope.

The buildings include a vacant house at 192 Toronto Road and the former manse and garage structures at 196 Toronto Road. They are being demolished to make way for the future construction of the access road between Toronto Road and the site of the new long-term low-level waste management facility, which will be built on the site of the existing Welcome Waste Management Facility.

The demolition work will be done by JMX Contracting Inc., which has been awarded a contract and will work under the supervision of Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) as the federal department responsible for all major contract work associated with the PHAI MO. The work is scheduled to take approximately 21 calendar days to complete, depending on weather conditions.

The security, safety and health of workers and the public are a primary concern of the Government of Canada and the contractor. Workers will wear required protective equipment and all materials from this demolition will be handled and disposed of in a safe manner, following all applicable federal, provincial and local standards, regulations and procedures. Temporary fencing will also be placed around the demolition sites to prevent unauthorized access.

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Former Dr. Powers School Redevelopment Spurs Further Radiological Investigations

Port Hope, Ont. (September 16, 2010) – Extensive investigations have been carried out through the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Office's (LLRWMO) Construction Monitoring Program (CMP) at the former Dr. L. B. Powers School. Analysis of all soil samples collected from boreholes drilled under the building showed concentrations well below the LLRWMO CMP and Port Hope Area Initiative cleanup criterion of 0.29 Bq/g for Radium-226 and confirmed that the building is safe for all uses.

The property of the former Dr. Powers School at 64 Ward Street is being redeveloped by the TVM Group and Habitat for Humanity. The renovation of the old school building triggered the radiological testing at the school building site, which is normal procedure under the Construction Monitoring Program. The LLRWMO operates the program in cooperation with the Municipality of Port Hope. The LLRWMO retained the services of MMM Group Limited in May 2010 to undertake an investigation which involved drilling 42 boreholes to sample soil for Radium-226 under the building and within three metres around the perimeter.

Gamma radiation readings were collected from surface level to a depth of three metres (9.8 feet) in each borehole. Through this sub-surface testing, a small amount of historic low-level radioactive waste was identified some 30 cm (one foot) below the ground at the exterior of the building's northwest corner. Further testing showed that the waste material is covered by clean soil and, therefore, does not present a health risk. This contaminated soil will be excavated and transported to the Pine Street North Extension Temporary Storage Site under the supervision of the LLRWMO as development proceeds.

Under the CMP, soil testing will continue on the property as required to permit the TVM and Habitat for Humanity developments to proceed. Any portion of the 64 Ward Street property not included in the CMP investigations will be surveyed during Phase 2 of the Port Hope Area Initiative.

The former Dr. Powers School was the subject of numerous radon gas investigations dating back to the mid 1970s. Previous test results showed that radon levels in occupied areas of the school met Health Canada criteria for safe occupancy.

See the accompanying Backgrounder and Fact Sheet for a complete list of the investigations and their findings.

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Port Hope Residents' Group to Observe Trial Cleanup

Port Hope, Ont. (September 30, 2010) – A panel of local residents has been created by the Port Hope Area Initiative Management Office (PHAI MO) to observe the trial resurvey and remediation program currently underway in the community. The six members of the group were selected to represent a broad spectrum of local interests.

“The observer group will have an opportunity to review how contractors are conducting resurvey and remediation activities in the trial project, under the supervision of the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Office on behalf of the PHAI,” says Bob Neufeld, Manager, Stakeholder Relations and Communications, PHAI MO. “The trial project and input from the group will help us refine the methodologies and procedures that will be implemented in the overall cleanup phase, including the resurvey of all properties in Ward One, which is scheduled to begin in 2012.”

Group members will be given recent survey results on a private property that has been selected for remediation in the Small Scale Site Resurvey and Remediation Cost Assessment (SRCA) trial. During several sessions at the property, they will observe and report on the conduct of physical cleanup work. The group will consolidate their impressions in a public report which they will present to the PHAI MO and the Municipality of Port Hope by the end of November 2010.

The public members of the group are:

- Mike Smith (Port Hope resident and Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority employee);
- Jack Goering (Port Hope environmentalist and initial proponent of the observer group);
- Andy Johncox (member, Port Hope Community Health Concerns Committee);
- Wendy Giroux (Manager, Port Hope and District Chamber of Commerce); and
- Matt Dobie and Emily Steadman (Students, Port Hope High School).

One representative each from the PHAI MO, the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Office and the Municipality of Port Hope will serve as information resources and will assist the group during their visits to the demonstration site.

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PORT HOPE TRIAL REMEDIATION WORK SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED

Port Hope, Ont. (December 22, 2010) – The Port Hope Area Initiative Management Office (PHAI MO) is pleased to announce the successful conclusion of key activities in the trial remediation of the property at 132 King Street in Port Hope.

During the trial remediation project, approximately 60 truckloads of soil contaminated with historic low-level radioactive waste were removed from the King Street property in the period from late October to late November. The soil was safely transported to the Pine Street Extension Temporary Storage Site, which is licensed by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC). A combination of poor weather conditions and the need for more material to be removed from the site extended the work schedule by several weeks. Once the excavation was completed and verified, workers began to restore the site – a process that will be completed in spring 2011.

“The lessons that we’ve learned in conducting this trial remediation will be extremely helpful to us as we plan our remediation work at other locations in Port Hope in the coming years,” says Glenn Case, PHAI’s Manager, Project Engineering. “We look forward to completing the landscaping and restoration of the King Street property next spring.”

Throughout the remediation work, high-volume air samplers and low flow pumps were used to monitor air quality at the site. Dust levels were found to be typical of any urban environment. The levels of total suspended particulates (TSP) and long-lived alpha particles were well below the standards established by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE) and the CNSC. Dust was also stringently managed by covering work areas, cleaning trucks and applying contamination control measures such as a “clean zone”. Water that had accumulated at the site was regularly analyzed and also found to be within applicable MOE criteria and was sent for commercial treatment and disposal on December 8 and 9 to allow for backfilling to continue.

The remediation work at 132 King Street was conducted under the supervision of the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Office (LLRWMO) as part of the Small-Scale Site Resurvey and Remediation Trials Cost Assessment (SRCA) program. This initiative is designed to help inform the PHAI MO as it pre-pares for the next phase in the cleanup of historic low-level radioactive waste in the Municipality of Port Hope.

“On behalf of the PHAI MO, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to Carene Smith, the owner of the property at 132 King Street,” says PHAI Project Director Christine Fahey. “Ms. Smith was kind enough to allow us to conduct this trial remediation on her property and we’re grateful for her cooperation and support.”

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PORT HOPE AREA INITIATIVE SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT

Port Hope, Ont.(October, 2010) – During the first week of November, the Port Hope Area Initiative Management Office (PHAI MO) will be launching their ninth annual public attitude survey in Port Hope.

This telephone survey, conducted by Intellipulse Research, an independent public affairs and marketing research firm, will require just a few minutes of respondents time. The data collected will help the PHAI MO better understand Port Hope resident’s attitudes about the Project’s plans for the cleanup and safe long-term management of historic low-level radioactive waste and how best to keep the community informed.

“We want to know what local residents are thinking and how they’re feeling,” says Bob Neufeld, Manager, Stakeholder Relations and Communications. “That helps us communicate more effectively. This year we will be asking more questions about media habits so we can learn how residents prefer to share their views and stay informed about the Project.”

As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance communications with the community, the PHAI MO launched a revamped website (www.phai.ca) this fall. It offers more in-depth and up-to-the-minute information, including interactive features like “Stay up to date”, an “email subscription service”, and “Ask us” where public questions can be directed to specific departments, encouraging dialogue online. The website also includes “what’s happening now?” sections featuring the latest photos and announcements of work in progress.

The revamped website supplements the PHAI MOs existing communications tools, including the Project Information Exchange (PIE), located at 115 Toronto Road. Local residents are encouraged to visit the PIE to meet with PHAI MO staff and get copies of project-related documents. It’s mission-critical to us to offer everyone in the community a point of contact, whether you’re web-savvy or you’d prefer to chat. We want to make project information as easy to access as possible,” says Christine Fahey, Project Director, PHAI MO.

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Public Awareness and Confidence in Port Hope Area Initiative Remain High

Port Hope, Ontario (January 28, 2010) – A strong majority of Port Hope residents are satisfied with their community, aware of the presence of historic low-level radioactive waste, yet hardly ever think about the issue. These results are among the findings of an independent public attitude survey conducted by Intellipulse Inc. in November 2009.

The telephone survey, which was conducted for the Port Hope Area Initiative Management Office (PHAI MO), polled 350 people in Port Hope (250 in Ward 1 and 100 in Ward 2) to find out how knowledgeable residents are about efforts to clean up and manage the historic low-level radioactive waste and if they are confident that this work can be done safely. This was the eighth consecutive year that the survey was conducted in Port Hope.

Over three-quarters of the residents polled continue to express confidence that the waste can be safely managed at the proposed new facility – rising from 65 percent in 2002 to 78 percent in 2009. As in previous surveys, residents expressed a high level of satisfaction with life in Port Hope, with over 90 percent saying they like living in the community. At the same time, 75 percent of respondents say they think about low-level radioactive waste in the community “not very often” or “never.”

Thirty-three percent of those surveyed indicated that “radioactive waste” (which includes “relocation of the waste,” “radioactive waste in general” and “groups or people complaining about the waste”) was the most important issue facing the community, with “unemployment and lack of economic growth” named by 25 percent of respondents. Eighty-nine percent of respondents identified the clean-up of low-level radioactive waste in Port Hope as either “very important” or “somewhat important.”

Awareness of the Port Hope Area Initiative is at its highest ever at 87 percent and most respondents are satisfied with accessibility of information and their opportunities to provide input to the Port Hope Project. Twenty percent of respondents identify PHAI MO staff as the source for the most accurate and complete information about the Project, with independent, qualified scientists and the Municipality of Port Hope ranking slightly lower.

The Port Hope Area Initiative also offers the Property Value Protection (PVP) Program, which protects residents from losses on the sale, mortgaging or rental of property as it relates to the conduct of the Port Hope Project. Forty-one percent of all respondents said they were familiar with the PVP Program, while 49 percent of those with property in the area covered by the PVP Program indicated familiarity with the Program.

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A summary of the results of this survey, as well as the previous annual surveys can be found on the PHAI Web site at www.phai.ca or by visiting the Project Information Exchange at 5 Mill Street South in downtown Port Hope.

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Canada 

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Observer Group photo



CLEANUP OBSERVER GROUP FORMED – Members of a newly formed Observer Group gathered on September 10th for an introduction to the trial resurvey and remediation project being conducted for the Port Hope Area Initiative (PHAI). Front row, from the left: resident members Andy Johncox and Jack Goering with Derek Elion of SNC Lavalin, contractors for this trial project. Back row: Sue Stickley and Mark Gardiner, assistants from the PHAI and LLRWMO; Mike Smith, Matt Dobie and Wendy Giroux, Observer Group members; and Sandra Weeks, assistant from the Municipality of Port Hope. Missing from the photo is Emily Steadman, a second student chosen by the group to join them.

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Summer trial resurvey project in Port Hope investigates smaller properties

Port Hope, Ont. (July 13, 2010) – Port Hope residents will see more project-related activity around the community in the coming months, as the trial resurvey for the Port Hope Area Initiative Management Office (PHAI MO) gets underway. This trial project is the latest step forward in the Port Hope Area Initiative's (PHAI's) efforts to complete the cleanup of Port Hope's historic low-level radioactive waste.

This project involves going back and surveying again approximately 35 properties around the community for the presence of historic low-level radioactive waste. A consulting team from SNC Lavalin Inc. will be in charge of the resurvey on behalf of the PHAI MO. The properties were chosen based on data that was compiled in the initial clean-up work done in the 1970s by the Government of Canada and maintained through the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Office (LLRWMO) and its ongoing Construction Monitoring Program.

"The properties involved were chosen because they represent a variety of types of resurvey situations we expect to face when the full resurvey and remediation work begins in about two years," says Bob Neufeld, Manager, Stakeholder Relations and Communications for the PHAI MO. "The work that is being done now will provide a basis for the full resurvey program to be carried out under the overall cleanup effort in Port Hope."

Lessons learned about planning, costing and conducting field work during the trial resurvey will be applied to the complete resurvey of about 4,500 properties in Port Hope (Ward 1) that will be undertaken as part of the overall clean-up project, which is expected to begin in 2012. In addition to testing the manner in which the full resurvey will be conducted, the trial will also look at the effectiveness of the associated communications, to ensure it meets the needs of the local residents, and the manner in which the effectiveness of the cleanup will be confirmed.

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Information about the Port Hope Area Initiative and this resurvey project is available at www.phai.ca or from the Project Information Exchange at 115 Toronto Road in Port Hope at (905) 885-0291.

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