

For immediate release

New Study Shows Inadequate Hazardous Waste Regulations Pose Threat to Public Safety and the Environment

Proposed changes to Ontario's hazardous waste regulations would make a serious situation worse, according to a comprehensive report released today by the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (CIELAP).

The regulatory changes proposed by the provincial government last November would have the effect of reducing public knowledge of the province's hazardous waste problems. Furthermore, the report states that, in some cases, the proposed changes have the potential to pose significant threats to public safety as well as environmental quality.

The report highlights the province's proposed expansions of the exemptions for the recycling of hazardous wastes. This proposal gives us cause for serious concern. This is particularly true in light of the history of illegal waste disposal under the guise of recycling in the province, the Plastimet fire, and the subsequent report of the Office of the Fire Marshal, said Mark Winfield, the Institute's Director of Research and principal author of the report.

The report, entitled *Hazardous Waste Management in Ontario: A Report and Recommendations*, states that the provincial government has no reliable estimate of the total amounts of toxic and other hazardous wastes generated in Ontario each year, and that the province's regulatory framework for managing these wastes contains major gaps. These include the absence of any provincial regulations on industrial discharges to sewers, which has been estimated to be the single largest way in which waste generators deal with their hazardous wastes. The province also lacks modern emission standards for hazardous waste incinerators, hospital incinerators, and facilities using liquid industrial wastes as fuel.

The report makes extensive recommendations for the overhaul and modernization of the province's regulatory framework for the management of hazardous wastes. These are intended to fill the gaps in the available information, ensure the protection of the environment and public health and safety, enhance the public accountability of the province and industry for their activities in this area, and promote hazardous waste reduction and pollution prevention.

The report also makes recommendations for changes to federal laws and regulations affecting the management of hazardous wastes in Ontario. These include reforms to the National Pollutant Release Inventory, the hazardous waste export/import

regulations made under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, and provisions of federal pesticide regulations permitting the continued use and sale of de-registered pesticides.

We recognize that these reforms at the federal and provincial levels will require several years to implement and require substantial investments of resources. However, we believe that these steps are necessary to ensure a safe and environmentally sustainable future for Ontarians, concluded Anne Mitchell, CIELAP s Executive Director.

An Application for the Review of the provisions of the province's hazardous waste regulations and policies affected by the recommendations contained in the report was filed by the Institute with the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario under the Environmental Bill of Rights this morning.

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For copies of Hazardous Waste Management In Ontario: A Report and Recommendations contact:

Anne Mitchell
Executive Director
(416)-923-3529 ext 25
info@cielap.org

The Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy has for been commenting on and monitoring policy and regulatory changes related to the environment for 30 years.
