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For immediate release

Not enough to turn back toxic tide *Clement's hazardous waste changes fall short of needed reforms*

Environment Minister Tony Clement's reforms deal with some - but not all - of the weaknesses in Ontario's hazardous waste regulations that have attracted an increasing amount of American wastes into the province, the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (CIELAP) said today.

"CIELAP welcomes the proposed changes to hazardous waste rules the minister announced yesterday, but Ontario still doesn't measure up to our American neighbour's regulations. Until remaining loopholes are plugged, no one should expect the toxic tide of foreign wastes to subside," said Anne Mitchell, executive director of CIELAP.

The Americans tightened their hazardous waste regulations in 1994, becoming more stringent than Ontario rules, and toxic imports into the province suddenly surged ahead of exports.

Hazardous wastes imported into Ontario from the United States quintupled from 56,000 tonnes in 1993 to 288,000 tonnes in 1998, the latest year for which statistics are available.

"Three major hazardous waste regulatory reforms are still needed if Ontario is to match U.S. standards and cease being America's dumping ground," said Mark Winfield, CIELAP research director.

- Banning of disposal on land unless hazardous wastes have been treated using "best available treatment technology."
- Tougher operating and emission standards for hazardous waste incinerators, matching the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's new standards adopted last September.
- More stringent financial assurance and insurance requirements for hazardous waste handlers, and treatment and disposal facilities.

"Ontario rules are still inadequate to protect our health, safety and environment," Dr. Winfield said.

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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.