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For immediate release

Weak Ontario law draws waste imports

Sarnia, Hamilton, Burlington, St. Catharines getting more hazardous waste from the USA

Importation of US hazardous waste into Ontario rose 138% between 1994 and 1998. Hazardous waste generation by Ontario industries and facilities rose by 41.8% over the same period. These are two of the major findings of a new study *Open for Toxics: A Study of Hazardous Waste Generation and Disposal* in Ontario released today by the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (CIELAP).

"This report shows that importing hazardous waste to Ontario has become a growth industry in Ontario. To protect the health of Ontarians, the Province must act now to reverse this trend" observed Anne Mitchell CIELAP's Executive Director.

This is the first detailed analysis of Ontario Ministry of the Environment hazardous waste data in over a decade. CIELAP undertook the research in response to their concerns that despite the limited data provided to by the Ministry of the Environment and Environment Canada there was an alarming trend towards massive increases in imports of hazardous waste.

"When CIELAP asked for more details about where the waste was being generated, what it was, and where it was going, there were few answers. We were told they hadn't done the analysis needed to answer those questions - so we did the analysis ourselves," said Mark Winfield, the Institute's Director of Research.

"Translating the large volume of raw Ontario Ministry of the Environment data into something that was meaningful was a challenging job, the use of advanced database software was a key element to the success of the final analysis" observed James Yacoumidis, CIELAP Research Officer, and principle author of the study.

The report ranks the largest generators and receivers of hazardous waste in Ontario. Separate charts detail US generators shipping waste to Ontario, and the Ontario receivers of those wastes.

The report includes charts which illustrate: companies generating or receiving hazardous waste, types and volumes of hazardous waste and communities which are the destination of the product.

· There are breakdowns of the composition waste generated and received. Landfill leachates (a grossly polluted liquid generated by municipal waste disposal sites) is the largest single

component of the waste stream (34%), and also the type of waste with the largest total growth in waste generation.

- The largest percentage growth in waste generation has been in steel making residues (247%).
- Detailed breakdowns of disposal practices (landfill, incineration etc) are provided. Largest percentage growth has been disposal to landfill (127%).
- Regional breakdowns of waste generation and receipts are included. Sarnia, Hamilton, Guelph and Ottawa are identified as the largest receiving districts for hazardous wastes in Ontario.
- Waste import patterns from the US are illustrated including details associated with the major increases in waste imports.
- Percentage increase in US waste going Ontario destinations are also calculated for example US waste increased to the following destinations by the attached percentages Sarnia (+220%), Guelph (+26%), Hamilton (+173%), Burlington (+154%) and St. Catharines (+126%).
- There has been a 257% increase in amounts of US waste going to Ontario landfills, and 113% increase in transfers to incineration.

The report includes focussed regional studies detailing activities in the Hamilton and Sarnia districts with respect to waste generation and receipts.

The report includes a status report of Ontario and US rules for hazardous waste disposal. The principle conclusion being that US has detailed regulatory standards for waste handling and disposal, and such rules are virtually non-existent in Ontario.

"[Open for Toxics: A Study of Hazardous Waste Generation and Disposal in Ontario](#) was produced by CIELAP to help the public better understand the unglamorous but critical important issue of hazardous waste management in Ontario and their hometowns," Anne Mitchell, the Institute's Executive Director.

"This report reinforces the need to implement previous recommendations put forward by the institute. It highlights the need for Ontario to modernize its standards for hazardous waste handling disposal. The present situation is putting the health, safety and environment of Ontario residents at serious risk, and exposes Ontario taxpayers to potential incalculable future clean-up costs," concluded Anne Mitchell, the Institute's Executive Director.

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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.