

The Port Hope Area Initiative from the Municipal Perspective

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Abstract

This paper explores the Municipal perspective of the Port Hope Area Initiative (PHAI). The PHAI is unique in that it emerged from proposals to the Federal Government and subsequently a tri-partite agreement between the Federal Government and the Municipalities of Port Hope and Clarington for the cleanup and management of historic low level radioactive wastes in long-term waste management facilities in their Municipalities. A key feature of the Port Hope Project is the remediation of many major and small scale sites in the urban area.

As part of this Legal Agreement, each Municipality is required to give consent at key milestones for the project to proceed to the next stage. In addition, the Municipality also has veto authority if the preferred option is changed by the federal government during its final review. The Agreement also ensures that the Municipalities have the resources to conduct an independent assessment of the work completed by the federal proponent and to advise the Municipality on related matters.

While this Legal Agreement provides the Municipalities with influence over the outcome of the EA and the project description, especially when compared with the typical role of municipalities in other Federal EAs, there are many challenges that Port Hope faces as partner in this process. These include:

- Balancing Port Hope's interests with those of the Federal Government;
- Reaching agreement on how clean the remediation sites should be;
- Considering the interests of future generations while meeting the needs of existing residents;
- Ensuring that the Project will have a positive legacy for Port Hope
- Ensuring that institutional controls are in place and that Port Hope has a partnership role in monitoring the Project performance during the Construction Phase and the long term Maintenance and Monitoring Phase.

In this context, this paper presents the unique aspects of the Municipal involvement in the process to finally achieve a safe, environmentally sound cleanup and long-term management of the historic low level wastes in Port Hope.