

News

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Public attitude survey finds that Port Hope residents know about historic low-level radioactive waste but don't dwell on it

PORT HOPE, ONTARIO – In early 2004, the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Office (LLRWMO) polled 600 people in Port Hope and Clarington to find out how knowledgeable residents are about the Initiative to manage the historic low-level radioactive waste, how it affects their lives, and whether they are confident it can be done safely.

Questions on historic low-level radioactive waste and related subjects were asked during a random telephone survey conducted in late May for the third consecutive year by IntelliPulse, a public affairs and marketing research firm engaged by the LLRWMO.

How satisfied are you with living in your community?

Satisfaction with living in Port Hope remains high. 94% report being *very* or *somewhat* satisfied with living here. In Ward 4, Clarington, results are similar at 98% satisfaction. The results are comparable to those in the previous two surveys.

Do you know about the historic waste?

In Port Hope, 82% is *very* to *somewhat* knowledgeable about the waste issue. In Ward 4 Clarington, 52% know something about it. Yet in each community, the majority of residents – 61% in Port Hope and 74% in Clarington Ward 4 -- *never* or *not very often* think about it.

Not dwelling on the issue doesn't mean Port Hope residents don't consider it important. Twenty-seven per cent of Port Hope residents identify the presence of historic low-level radioactive waste as a key issue facing the community. For 29% it contributes to a negative image. By contrast, in Ward 4, Clarington, only 1% mention the historic waste as a top community issue and only 5% see it as contributing to a negative image.

Have you heard of the Port Hope Area Initiative?

In both communities, awareness increased over the past year. In Ward 4 Clarington, awareness of the Port Granby Project rose to 59% from 44% in 2003. In Port Hope, 69% know about the Port Hope Project compared to 62% last year.

Do you believe the waste can be managed safely for the long term? Do you have specific concerns?

A majority of residents remain confident the waste can be safely managed at the proposed long-term management facilities. In Port Hope, 67% and in Ward 4 Clarington, 58% say they are *very* to *somewhat* confident.

More...

Prior to the telephone survey, through Initiative newsletters and area media, residents learned how the LLRWMO proposes to manage the waste for the long term. As a result, more people expressed an opinion about the waste management projects than in past surveys. In Ward 4, Clarington, 10% said they had no concerns compared to 22% in 2003; while in Port Hope, 9% had no concerns compared to 16% in 2003. Asked to name the two most important issues about the waste management proposals, residents in both communities cited transportation, protecting the groundwater against leakage and safely containing the waste.

Will the projects to clean up and manage the waste affect your life?

People were asked how three different phases of the projects might affect them: waste excavation, transportation and facility development. In both communities, the majority of residents felt there would be *no change* in their feeling of health and sense of well-being. The vast majority of residents did not expect their use and enjoyment of their own property or of public facilities, such as parks and beaches, to change.

Once the Initiative is finished, how will it affect the community's image?

Both Port Hope and Clarington residents believe the effect on their community's image will be positive. In Port Hope, 79% volunteered benefits such as enhanced image, greater peace of mind/feelings of safety and economic growth. In Clarington, 57% predicted positive results. An improved community image and greater feelings of safety were cited most often.

The complete public attitude surveys can be reviewed at the Project Information Exchange at 110 Walton Street in Port Hope. From 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday visitors can drop-in, discuss their views and pick up information on the Port Hope Area Initiative.

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