

Love Canal waste being trucked to Canada for disposal

Trucks take toxic waste from Love Canal facility in Corunna, Ont., to be burned and buried

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A notorious — and noxious — part of U.S. history is being moved to Canada.

At least 80 truckloads of toxic waste left over from the infamous Love Canal are being trucked to a facility in Corunna, Ont., near Sarnia, to be burned and buried.

The Love Canal is a U.S. neighbourhood built on a chemical dumping ground from the 1940s and 50s in New York state. The site contained chemicals and toxins dating from the Second World War.

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The waste coming to Canada, truckload by truckload, is from a smaller dump a few kilometres from the Love Canal. The smaller dump contained material that had been moved from the Love Canal site.

"It's mostly things like toluene, benzenes, cancer-causing type materials — leftovers from the processing of pesticides," said Robert Cliffe, an official with the town of Wheatfield, where the waste originates.

Decades ago, people unknowingly lived - and died -- while residing atop the toxic waste dump.

There were miscarriages, birth defects and cancer, all reported by residents.

The Love Canal covered 36 blocks and was built atop more than 80 chemicals, including 11 now suspected of causing cancer. The problem was uncovered in the 1970s, and the homes were demolished..

Waste will be inert, company says

Clean Harbors has a contract to incinerate part of the waste and bury the rest.

"They are destroyed at 1,300 degrees. Then we test the inert soil to make sure it meets all of our disposal requirements," said Mike Parker of Clean Harbors. "There are always contaminants with emissions released into the atmosphere with any industry."

Jim Stenton's farm is near the Clean Harbors incinerator tasked with disposing of the Love Canal waste.

The giant industrial smoke stack is visible from his property.

"You see the white plume coming off it -- it's kind of a greyish plume," he said.

In 2011, Stenton said [he suffered headaches, watery eyes and stomach cramps](#) he claimed were caused by Clean Harbors emissions.

'You see the white plume coming off it — it's kind of a greyish plume.'- *Jim Stenton, resident*

He sued the company and won. In 2013, Clean Harbors Environmental was ordered to pay Stenton \$18,000 in damages.

Some days, the plume of smoke is black, Stenton said.

Soon, that plume will contain tiny particles waste from the Love Canal.

Farmers from Petrolia, near Sarnia, gather in Stenton's kitchen to talk about the project.

"I can smell that stuff and see it coming out the chimney," neighbour Ernst Lind said. "I don't think that's good for you."

Harry Rainsberry calls the waste "some of the most deadly chemicals known to man."

"Our grandchildren are going to have to live with this," he said. "That's a great big ticking time bomb sitting over there -- just waiting to explode."

Neighbours want to have a say

His neighbour, Betty Cole, has lived at her home for 45 years.

"We weren't informed about them coming down the highway," she said.

She feels she has no say in the matter.

John Bennett of the Sierra Club of Canada said U.S. waste should stay on that side of the border.

"This is a toxic road trip that is unnecessary," Bennett said. "Canadians should know about these things in advance and have some say on whether they should happen or not."

The federal and Ontario environment ministries say the process follows all regulations -- the trucks are tracked -- travelling only on certain roads.

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No 90.89% (359 votes)

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