



NEWS LOCAL

MPP Bob Bailey expresses concern about lack of details from ministry



By Paul Morden, Sarnia Observer
Thursday, December 11, 2014 4:20:37 EST PM



The Ontario and Canadian governments appear to have "dropped the ball" by not informing residents about shipments of hazardous Love Canal waste that began arriving in the Sarnia area this week, says Sarnia-Lambton MPP Bob Bailey.

New York officials have estimated that 80 truckloads, or approximately 1,223 cubic metres of material containing pesticides, including DDT, as well as benzene, toluene and other chemicals, is being removed from an inactive landfill site near Love Canal over the next two to four weeks and taken to the Clean Harbors hazardous waste disposal site near Brigden.

Kate Jordan, a spokesperson for the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, said Clean Harbors notified the ministry shipments were beginning this week, and that one arrived at the site Tuesday.

Bailey said he heard back from Clean Harbors after he began asking questions following media reports in the fall about the plan to ship the material from Wheatfield, New York, but he's still waiting to speak with Glen Murray, minister of environment and climate change.

Bailey said his office was "getting the real run around" from the Ontario and federal environment ministries.

"I'm disappointed we couldn't get some more straight answers on it," he said.

Bailey added that as soon as he heard the material was coming from Love Canal he realized the public would want to know more about the plan.

"I think the ministry has probably dropped the ball on this, that they didn't do more of a communications step."

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation held a session in Wheatfield in September where residents in that community were invited to ask questions about the cleanup. The department also has information about the project posted on its website.

John Bennett, national program director for Sierre Club Canada, asked, "Why wouldn't there be similar care in Ontario?"

He wrote about his concerns with the Love Canal waste shipments recently in his online blog after being contacted by Sierre Club supporters in the Sarnia area.

"The philosophy here is, what you don't know won't hurt you," Bennett said.

After Bailey spoke with The Observer Thursday, his office called back to say the provincial ministry was offering to provide the MPP with a briefing on Friday.

The contaminated soil coming to the Clean Harbors site was buried in the New York State landfill in 1968 by the state's highway department during construction of an expressway that passes through the southern edge of Love Canal, a neighbourhood east of Niagara Falls, New York, where chemicals buried in the 1940s and 1950s by the Hooker Chemical Company began seeping decades later into yards, basements and creeks.

In the late 1970s, health officials declared the area a public threat to human health, followed by the declaration of a state of emergency, lawsuits and cleanup efforts.

A New York State spokesperson has said the material in the now closed Wheatfield landfill site does not pose an immediate threat, but Occidental Chemical, the company that acquired Hooker Chemical in the late 1960s, decided to remove the soil and send it to the Clean Harbors site.

The Ontario ministry spokesperson said the truckloads of soil are crossing the border into Ontario at the Blue Water Bridge near Sarnia, after travelling to a Clean Harbors facility in Michigan.

That facility in Burton, Michigan has pre-approval with the federal government to send shipments into Ontario to the Clean Harbors site, Jordan said.

There have been numerous shipments of material to the company's facility near Sarnia over the recent decades that originated at cleanup sites in the northeastern U.S., said Phil Retallick, Clean Harbors senior vice-president of compliance and regulatory affairs.

"And, in fact, Love Canal waste has been brought to the Sarnia facility for landfilling over the last couple of decades, as well," he said.

"We have an established relationship with the responsible parties at that site that goes back years."

Retallick said capabilities at the Sarnia-area facility have been enhanced because of land disposal regulations Ontario enacted in recent years, requiring pre-treatment of organic waste before its landfilled.

"That's one reason why they're wanting to bring the waste to our site in Sarnia."

Retallick said the facility has a thermal desorption unit to extract hydrocarbons from soil to meet provincial requirements.

The soil is then tested to ensure it meets Ontario's standards before it is landfilled on the site, he said.

The combination of the thermal desorption unit and a landfill makes the Sarnia-area facility unique, he said.

"That is one of the few combination facilities east of the Mississippi River."

Retallick said Love Canal was "the singular focus" for the development of the Superfund cleanup program in the U.S., adding it's an example of why strong laws and technology were needed for the proper clean up those types of sites.

"It's our view that our Sarnia complex plays an important regional and national role in both treating and disposing of remediation waste from these types of sites, both in Canada and the U.S.," Retallick said.

"By cleaning up these sites, we improve the quality of life for the folks who live and work around them."

But Bennett said transporting the material from New York to the Sarnia area puts people along the route at risk.

"This is not the way to deal with toxic waste," he said.

"We need to find ways to deal with them, that do not involve burning them or trucking them long distances."

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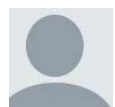
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Artestis · 2 hours ago

While it may be fun to distract people by blaming the government, what I'd really like to know is what motivates a company to accept anything from the Love Canal area. Oh, wait, profit. Never mind, it's worth the health of residents here if it makes money for CH. I wonder why a similar, American company wouldn't take this killer shipment.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



AndrewKeller · 2 hours ago

I don't understand what the big deal is. Clean Harbours disposes of hazardous waste - it's just what they do. What does it matter where it comes from? If it's not from the Love Canal then it will be from somewhere else, and it will affect me just the same.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



sarniasue · 2 hours ago

It's official. Sarnia-Lambton the Toxic Dump of Canada. Will they include the Love Canal Waste in

the tourism brochure? When is that Health Study again? Corunna made the CBC news.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

Garry Horsnell · 4 hours ago

Canada sends minerals, lumber and oil to the U.S.A. and imports toxic waste (garbage) from the U.S.A. What a deal.

The U.S.A. should keep its toxic, hazardous Love Canal waste in the U.S.A. and deal with it in the U.S.A.

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

Ambrose Bierce · 8 hours ago

If Bob Bailey is now actually concerned about local environmental dangers - does this mean we are beyond doomed?

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

Theoutsier · 10 hours ago

How is this not a news on any national networks? They bring very potent carcinogens from Love Canal to Canada. I don't know why we have to clean up the foreign cooperations' toxic waste

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

Opinionated3 · 10 hours ago

Bailey, you know and I know that the free trade agreement trumps all. Michigan had to accept Toronto's waste and we have to accept U.S.'s waste. Very simple. Stop screwing around when you know better!

^ | v · Reply · Share >

happy gardener · 16 hours ago

Well Bob how long has this been on the radar. I read a story close to 2 months ago about it coming....yes yes the government works slow...The speed won't get any faster until the farmers complain

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

Lucky Charm · 17 hours ago

I'm surprised the Mayor on behalf of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative doesn't have a comment.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

Common Sense · 17 hours ago

What are they going to do now? Ship it back? Not going to happen....it's not the first or the last time big business and government have kept things hush hush for the sake of a profit....Its always easier to ask forgiveness than ask for permission...

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share >

slimt0123 · 17 hours ago



Bringing hazardous waste from the States to Sarnia?..... Hmm... we have enough of our own waste to get rid of let alone burning it here in clean Ontario... ya ok.... more bad air!

7 ^ | v • Reply • Share >

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unwashedpeon — Yeah but doesn't greed and bureaucratic mis-management always destroy good ideas/businesses?

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charlie w — this is why things should not be left in the hands of the general public, clearly they show no forgiveness for ...

