

## **Update on Fort Erie Spill**

APRIL 22, 2015 – Approximately 50 residents attended a Town Hall meeting in Fort Erie April 21 to receive an update and ask questions about the chemical spill at 833 Helena in Fort Erie. Information was provided by officials from the Town of Fort Erie, Niagara Region and the Ministry of the Environment.

The Region was first alerted to the presence of a substance in the ditch at 833 Helena on March 9 and immediately initiated efforts to contain the spill and remove the contaminant, primarily the chemical toluene. These efforts are continuing. The source of the spill is the property at 833 Helena, site of Carvern Petro-chemical Inc. which is no longer in operation.

The following statement was presented by Ron Tripp, Commissioner of Public Works, Niagara Region:

The Region is a victim of this spill. Some of the contaminants from the spill migrated to our property – the ditches along the road are Regional property. The health and safety of the public is our top priority so we acted immediately to investigate when we were first alerted to the spill and took action to contain the spill.

We have done significant mitigation at the site to ensure the safety of our water source and to prevent further contamination. Based on the results of regular water testing since the spill occurred, there is no health and safety risk to residents.

We are urging the Ministry of the Environment to work with those who own and control the property at 833 Helena – the source of the spill – to take all necessary steps to ensure the spill is contained and to protect our property and residents from any negative effects of the spill.

The Region's first obligation is the health and safety of our residents, but we also have an obligation to protect our resources and taxpayer dollars. We have taken actions to try to contain the spill at 833 Helena so that there is no further impact to Regional property. However, the actual source of the problem at 833 Helena has not been identified by the owners or the Ministry of Environment. As a result, we are still experiencing the occasional break-through of containment into the Region's ditches.

Until those responsible have definitively identified the source of the spill and fully contained it to their property and are able to prevent any further migration onto Region property, there are still potential problems for the Region. Again, we urge those responsible for the spill to take all necessary steps to ensure the spill is contained. Once the Region can be assured there is no further migration of spill contaminants onto Region property, the Region will remove its equipment and leave the site, which we expect could occur sooner rather than later

The Region would then leave the ultimate containment and clean-up of 833 Helena to the owners and occupants of the property and the Ministry of the Environment, which has authority and jurisdiction to address spill contamination under the *Environmental Protection Act*.

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