



Canadian Nuclear Laboratories | Laboratoires Nucléaires Canadiens



**PORT HOPE AREA
INITIATIVE**

2022 Port Granby Project Public Attitude Survey Research Report

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Prepared by:



Land Acknowledgement

CNL's Historic Waste Program Management Office and the Port Hope Area Initiative projects are situated on the traditional and treaty lands of the Williams Treaties First Nations, specifically the Gunshot Treaty signed with the Mississauga First Nations of Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Scugog Island.

These Mississauga Nations are also signatories to various 18th and 19th century treaties that covered lands in different parts of south-central Ontario. In 1923, the Mississauga First Nations and the Chippewa First Nations consisting of Rama, Beausoleil and Georgina Island signed the Williams Treaties and together, over 90 years later in June 2018, joined to ensure that their rights to, and the relationship with, these lands are respected through a renewed agreement with Canada and the Province of Ontario.

The area in which we are situated is also home to Indigenous Peoples from across the region and Canada. CNL is grateful to have the opportunity to work on these traditionally and culturally significant lands and waterways.

1. Summary

Methodology

As part of the Port Granby Project, periodic public attitude research is commissioned to monitor area residents' level of knowledge and awareness about historic low-level radioactive waste and the Port Hope Area Initiative (PHAI), identify issues and concerns, determine the communication needs of the public, and provide data regarding public attitudes and preferences.

The most recent iteration of the Port Granby Project Public Attitude Survey was conducted by CCI Research Inc. (CCI Research) in the winter of 2022, on behalf of Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL). Survey packages containing an introduction letter explaining the project, a survey questionnaire booklet, and a postage-paid return envelope were mailed to 564 area property owners in November 2022. Respondents had the option of completing the questionnaire booklet and returning it by letter mail, completing the survey online, or calling CCI Research toll-free to complete their survey by telephone. Additionally, subsequent to the initial mailing, a reminder letter and two reminder postcards were mailed to all households encouraging property owners to complete their questionnaire. In total, 164 respondents completed the survey: 102 questionnaire booklets were returned by mail, 60 were completed online, and two surveys were completed by telephone. The confidence interval for the overall Port Granby sample is approximately +/-6.5%, 19 times out of 20¹.

CNL was particularly interested in examining survey responses from property owners within Zone 3, Clarington, as this is the area where the Long-Term, Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Facility is located. Therefore, survey findings are presented in this report for the Overall Port Granby sample, as well as separately by proximity, where "Close Zone" represents households within Zone 3, Clarington, and "Far Zone" represents households from all other geographical zones combined. In total, 22% of survey respondents were from the Close Zone, and the remaining 78% were from the Far Zone.

This report presents the findings for the 2022 Port Granby Project Public Attitude Survey, and where applicable, compares the results to those from similar previous studies conducted within the past 10 years, in 2018, 2016, and 2014.

Key Findings

Awareness and Knowledge about Historic Low-Level Radioactive Waste in Area

Most survey respondents indicated that they rarely think about living in a community with a historic low-level radioactive waste management facility; specifically, about three-quarters (73%) reported thinking about it "not very often" or "never", which is comparable to previous years.

Self-assessed knowledge about the presence of historic low-level radioactive waste in the community is similar to previous years, with 80% of respondents overall indicating that they

¹ This means that if there were 100 samples of the same size drawn from the population, then 95/100 of these samples would show the result values that fall within a range of +/- 6.5% of the actual result values (including percentages) presented in this report, assuming a random and representative sample.

are “very knowledgeable” or “somewhat knowledgeable” about this topic. Close Zone respondents in particular reported a high level of knowledge about the historic low-level radioactive waste (86%) and reported being “very knowledgeable” more often than Far Zone respondents (37% vs. 15%).

Familiarity with the Port Granby Project

The large majority of respondents have heard about the Port Granby Project (81%). Most have also heard of the new Port Granby Long-Term Waste Management Facility (68%), the former Port Granby Waste Management Facility (67%), and the Port Hope Area Initiative (72%), although those from the Close Zone were more likely to report being aware of the Port Hope Area Initiative compared to those from the Far Zone (88% vs. 68%). Reported awareness appears to have declined somewhat in 2022, with relatively fewer respondents overall having heard of these items compared to one or more previous survey periods. Among Close Zone respondents, awareness of the former Port Granby Waste Management Facility was lower than that reported in 2014 and 2016.

When asked in a separate question about their familiarity with the Port Granby Project, about three-quarters of respondents (73%) reported that they were either “very familiar” or “somewhat familiar” with the project. Familiarity was somewhat higher in the Close Zone compared to the Far Zone, with a larger proportion indicating that they are “very familiar” with the Port Granby Project (44% vs. 26%).

Overall, 70% of respondents were aware that the new Port Granby Long-Term Waste Management Facility has been constructed. Based on a new question in 2022, 63% of respondents reported awareness that the waste at the former Port Granby Waste Management Facility has been removed and placed in the engineered aboveground storage mound for safe, long-term storage.

Confidence and Concerns Regarding the Port Granby Project

A total of about two thirds (68%) of survey respondents overall expressed confidence (“very confident” + “somewhat confident”) that waste can be safely managed at the new long-term waste management facility. Total confidence (“very confident” + “somewhat confident”) among Close Zone respondents increased in 2022 as compared with the results from 2014 (71% vs. 44%).

When asked to volunteer what concerns they had about the long-term waste management facility, there were a wide range of diverse issues or concerns identified by respondents. The most common concerns were similar themes related to contamination and the effect on the environment (21%), safety and security of the facility (17%), and concerns about spillage/leakage (15%). Concerns about the safe transportation of waste generally declined compared to previous years. Close Zone respondents generally identified the same issues, although they expressed somewhat more concern about the safety/security of the facility than those in the Far Zone (28% vs. 14%).

When asked to specify what actions or decisions would make them more confident about the safety of the facility, the most commonly reported themes were to have long-term testing / monitoring (38%) and to better inform the public (23%). Close Zone respondents were more likely than those in the Far Zone to identify long-term testing or monitoring as an

action that would make them feel more confident about the safety of the facility (53% vs. 34%).

When asked to identify the benefits of the Port Granby Project, almost half of all respondents identified one or more benefits, while the remainder did not respond or provided a response that did not reflect a benefit. The most commonly mentioned benefit was the cleanup and containment of the radioactive waste (24%), followed by a cleaner environment (10%), and improved health and safety in the community (10%).

Just over half of respondents indicated that no one in their household had been directly affected by the Port Granby Project (55%), while 17% felt they had been negatively affected by the project, and 8% indicated they had been positively affected. Respondents from the Close Zone were more likely than those from the Far Zone to report that they or someone in their household had been negatively affected by the Port Granby Project (32% vs. 12%). The most commonly mentioned negative effect overall was decreasing property value (42%) followed by issues with roads or traffic (23%).

Two-thirds of respondents (67%) expressed confidence (“very confident” + “somewhat confident”) in CNL’s ability to contain and treat contaminated groundwater and surface water at the Port Granby Project sites.

Property Value Protection Program

Over half of the survey respondents (58%) reported that they owned property within the Property Value Protection (PVP) Program zone. However, only one quarter (25%) overall reported being “very familiar” or “somewhat familiar” with the PVP program. Respondents from the Close Zone were more likely than those from the Far Zone to indicate they were familiar with the PVP Program (42% vs. 19%).

A total of 16% of respondents overall indicated that they were confident (“very confident” + “somewhat confident”) that the PVP Program will compensate for decrease of property value. This level of confidence was relatively similar to the past survey periods.

Communications

Independent qualified scientists were most often chosen as a source for receiving accurate and complete information about the Port Granby Project (24% first choice and 47% combined first, second or third choice), along with CNL staff (23% first choice and 40% combined first, second, or third choice) and the media (15% first choice and 43% combined first, second, or third choice).

With respect to CNL’s communication efforts, 73% of respondents overall reported being satisfied (“very satisfied” + “somewhat satisfied”) with the CNL’s efforts to provide information about the Port Granby Project. Respondents in the Close Zone reported even greater satisfaction than those from the Far Zone in terms of CNL’s efforts to provide them with information about the Port Granby Project (87% vs. 68%). In addition, results for overall Port Granby and the Close Zone show an increase in the proportion of respondents who reported that they were “very satisfied” with efforts to provide information about the Port Granby Project compared to the results from 2014 (note that the survey question referred to the PHAI’s efforts in 2014 and CNL’s efforts in 2022).

With respect to public confidence in the responsiveness of CNL, more than half (58%) of respondents expressed confidence that CNL will respond to any concerns they may have, with most indicating that they are “somewhat confident” (46%).

Overall, brochures or newsletters through the mail remained by far the top choice of respondents for receiving information about the Port Granby Project (62% first choice and 80% combined first, second or third choice). About half (53%) of Close Zone respondents selected public meetings or open houses with CNL staff as one of their top choices, while about one quarter (26%) of those from the Far Zone selected this as one of their top choices.

Less than half of respondents (41%) indicated that they “always” read the Port Granby Project newsletter and about one-third (34%) read it “sometimes”, while 19% did not recall receiving the newsletter. Respondents from the Close Zone were more likely than those from the Far Zone to say that they “always” read the Port Granby newsletter (60% vs. 36%).

With respect to primary sources of local news, the survey respondents most often relied on Clarington this Week (62%), followed by Global News/CHEXtv (36%), and the Orono Weekly Times (29%). Clarington This Week was generally identified by a smaller proportion of respondents overall as a primary source of local news in 2022 as compared to the previous survey periods (62% in 2022 vs. 84% in 2018, 85% in 2016, and 77% in 2014). Those in the Close Zone were more likely to identify Orono Weekly Times as a primary source of local news as compared to those in the Far Zone (56% vs. 21%).