



Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion & Protection

Office of the Chief Medical Officer of
Health

Regional Medical Officer of Health



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Response to Environmental Impact Statement

Remediation of Sydney Tar Ponds and Coke Oven Sites

May 5, 2006



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Outline

- Context
- Authority
- Partnership with others
- Independence
- Air monitoring
- Recommendations
- Summary



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■ Context

■ What is Public Health?

- *The science and art of promoting health, preventing disease, prolonging life and improving quality of life through the organized efforts of society.*
- *It combines sciences, skills and beliefs directed to the maintenance and improvement of the health of all people through collective action.*
- *The programs, services, and institutions involved tend to emphasize two things,*
 - *The prevention of disease and*
 - *The health needs of the population as a whole*

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■ Context

- Public Health – Core Functions include
 - Population health assessment
 - Health surveillance
 - Health promotion
 - Healthy activity
 - Disease and injury prevention
 - Health protection
- Reflected in the structure of NS HPP

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- Authority

- *Health Protection Act and Health Hazards Regulations*
- Ability to act to protect and reduce the risk to the public health
- CMOH and MOHs accountable to Minister of HPP

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- Authority
 - Shall develop surveillance plans for
 - communicable diseases
 - notifiable diseases
 - dangerous diseases



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- Authority

- Shall develop communication plans and protocols responding to
 - health hazards
 - notifiable diseases
 - communicable diseases
 - public health emergencies

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- Authority – Health Hazards
 - CMOH and MOH may
 - Conduct risk assessments
 - Monitor or audit potential or existing
 - Make any order necessary to
 - Prevent
 - Remedy
 - Mitigate

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- Partnership with Others
 - Access to expertise and resources in governments and academia to
 - Collect information and data
 - Analyze
 - Formulate
 - Act
 - Collaborate
 - Consult

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- Partnership with Others
 - Partners include
 - Federal government departments and agencies
 - Health Canada
 - Public Health Agency of Canada
 - Environment Canada
 - Department of Fisheries & Oceans
 - Canadian Food Inspection Agency



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- Partnership with Others
 - Partners include
 - Provincial government departments and agencies
 - NS Environment & Labour
 - NS Dept of Health
 - NS Dept of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture

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- Partnership with Others
 - Partners include
 - Other government departments and agencies
 - Cape Breton Regional Municipality
 - Sydney Tar Ponds Agency
 - Cape Breton District Health Authority
 - Academic partners
 - Dalhousie University
 - Cape Breton University

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- Independence – OCMOH & Reg. MOH
 - By legislative design
 - *Health Protection Act and Regulations*
 - Ability to act
 - Through permitting process of NSEL
 - By historical record
 - Independent and neutral
 - Recognized Canadian model



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- Air Monitoring Programs
 - Key Components
 - A targeted, acute and long-term program focused upon health related discharges
 - An open and transparent process for reporting air quality
 - Developed by stakeholders
 - Report to community, MOH
 - Include summary statistics
 - Current and cumulative values
 - Health impact interpretations



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- Air Monitoring Programs
 - Key Components
 - Quality assurance program which monitors the sensitivity and specificity of the air monitoring program
 - A communications plan which incorporates the views/comments of regional MOH regarding health impacts

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- Recommendations
 1. Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the regional MOH will support the clean-up process
 2. Clean-up must address the long-term socioeconomic benefits which will improve the health status of all residents

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■ Recommendations

3. **A caution:**

An unplanned incident at the incineration site, during startup or operation, might derail the entire clean-up process. The psychological and potential adverse health effects of such an incident should not be underestimated.

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- Summary
 - Public Health focuses upon
 - the prevention of disease within the population
 - MOH and CMOH has
 - duties and responsibilities to
 - Observe
 - Analyze
 - Prevent, remedy and/or mitigate

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- Summary
 - MOH and CMOH has
 - Partnerships with others
 - To consult and to contribute
 - Independence
 - To act and report

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- Summary

- MOH and CMOH supports the proposal and the EIS, but
 - Air monitoring program necessary for surveillance
 - Clean-up must address long-term socio-economic needs
 - Concerns about the socio-psychological and health impacts of an unplanned incinerator incident



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Thank You