



News Release

For Immediate Release

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No Co-ordinated Provincial Plan to Prioritize the Cleanup of Contaminated Sites: Auditor General

(TORONTO) The province does not have a co-ordinated overall plan or funding strategy in place for cleaning up its contaminated sites, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk says in her *2015 Annual Report*.

Contaminated sites are areas of land or water that are affected by contamination such as hazardous waste or pollution in concentrations that pose health and safety risks, and exceed specific levels under environmental standards.

Lysyk noted that the government has identified its high-risk contaminated sites, but lacks centralized oversight of all the contaminated sites it is responsible for cleaning up. The government's estimate of its future liability for remediating its sites is \$1.8 billion.

"The government needs a robust, ongoing process for identifying its contaminated sites, assessing the nature and extent of the contamination, mitigating the risks to the public and the environment, and remediating these sites for future use," Lysyk said.

Among the significant findings in the Report:

- Although individual ministries have their own lists of contaminated sites, the government has no centralized inventory.
- The province needs to implement a government-wide process for prioritizing high-risk contaminated sites for remediation; without one, it risks funding remediation of lower-priority sites and neglecting sites that have a greater impact on the health and safety of the public.
- The province needs to provide clear direction to ministries on how to consistently calculate and annually update the estimated liability for remediating contaminated sites.

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For more information, please contact:
Bonnie Lysyk
Auditor General
(416) 327-1326

For more information and to view the full report, please visit www.auditor.on.ca