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**For immediate release**

### **Hamilton home retrofitted to reduce the risk of basement flooding**

(Hamilton) - The Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR), with support from the City of Hamilton, has retrofitted a Hamilton home to reduce the risk of basement flooding. In 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2009, Hamilton has experienced heavy rainfall events that resulted in significant urban flooding damages. The City is not alone, as Toronto, Ottawa, Sarnia, Thunder Bay, Peterborough, Saskatoon, Montréal, Edmonton, Calgary, Moncton and many others have also experienced damaging urban flooding events over the past few years.

"Basement flooding, caused by overland water flows, infiltration and sewer backup, is a major concern for many urban municipalities in Canada," says ICLR's Executive Director Paul Kovacs. "With the increase in the frequency and intensity of rainfall events, along with urbanization and aging infrastructure, more homeowners are experiencing basement flooding. What's more, the proliferation of finished basements means that individual damage figures can be quite high. Effective management of flood risks requires investment and upgrading of municipal sewer infrastructure -- along with educated homeowners who take action to prevent flooding. Protecting properties from flooding is a shared responsibility. This retrofit demonstrates a number of ways that property owners can help guard against it."

Since September 2009, the City of Hamilton has had in place a Protective Plumbing Program (3P) which provides financial assistance and guidance to residential property owners respecting improvements to household plumbing in order to protect their properties from basement flooding as a result of sewer surcharging. The Protective Plumbing Program (3P) has been initiated to provide guidance and financial assistance to residential property owners seeking to undertake improvements to their homes that will reduce the potential for basement flooding, says Dan McKinnon of Water and Wastewater Operations.

Property owners can undertake improvements to their homes by completing any of the following: installation of backwater valves, sump pump installation in conjunction with a backwater valve, or disconnecting downspouts. When completed as per program guidelines, permit fees will be reimbursed above the \$2,000 maximum grant under the program. Sewer lateral repairs also require a permit and inspection and would also be reimbursed above the \$2,000 maximum grant for those eligible under the program. More information on the City of Hamilton's Protective Plumbing Program (3P) can be found at <http://www.hamilton.ca/CityDepartments/PublicWorks/WaterAndWasteWaterDev/ProtectivePlumbingProgram.htm>

Among its many resources, ICLR has issued a "Handbook for Reducing Basement Flooding," a publication that addresses the concerns of homeowners, local governments and insurance companies of the increasing instances of basement flooding. The booklet provides comprehensive information on how to mitigate flood risk for individuals and communities. It contains 20 measures that homeowners can take to reduce their risks and their neighbourhoods' risk of basement flooding. Many of the measures are simple and relatively inexpensive -- for

example, downspout disconnection, and sealing any cracks in foundation walls and basement floors.

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Established in 1998 by Canada's property and casualty insurers, ICLR is an independent, not-for-profit research institute based in Toronto and at the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada. ICLR is a centre of excellence for disaster loss prevention research and education. ICLR's research staff is internationally recognized for pioneering work in a number of fields including wind and seismic engineering, atmospheric sciences, water resources engineering and economics. Multi-disciplined research is a foundation for ICLR's work to build communities more resilient to disasters.

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