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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Manitoba Hydro provides homeowner loans for radon abatement projects *Provincial utility is first in Canada to help homeowners reduce the risk of lung cancer*

(Winnipeg) - Groups concerned about high levels of radon gas in some Manitoba houses today applauded a new Manitoba Hydro program to provide homeowner loans to help fund mitigation measures to reduce the amount of radon gas in their homes.

“Radon gas exposure is the second leading cause of lung cancer, behind smoking, and Manitobans are looking for ways they can reduce their risk,” said Erin Crawford, Senior Director of Public Issues and Community Engagement with the Canadian Cancer Society.

The Cancer Society, The Manitoba Lung Association and other industry groups have been working with Manitoba Hydro to introduce these consumer-friendly measures so Manitobans aren’t making critical health decisions based on cost. The program further encourages all Manitobans to test their homes for radon gas.

“Manitoba has more homes than any other province with higher than acceptable radon levels, according to Health Canada guidelines,” said Sheila McIntosh of the Manitoba Lung Association. “As people become aware of this, it is important to have solutions that provide Manitobans an affordable way to reduce their radon levels.

“We are pleased that Manitoba Hydro is providing homeowners an option to reduce their radon levels more readily.”

Lloyd Kuczek, Manitoba Hydro’s Vice President, Customer Care and Energy Conservation said that as a strong advocate for quality, healthy indoor air in Manitoba homes this program builds on initiatives already offered through the Energy Finance Plan

“We feel that radon mitigation is a great fit for this financing program,” he said. “As more Manitobans test their homes for radon, we are pleased to be able to help increase access and affordability for radon mitigation by allowing customers to finance this improvement.

According to Health Canada’s Cross-Canada Survey, 2010, 24% of Manitoba homes test above the acceptable levels for safe radon exposure. Radon gas is colourless, odourless, but prolonged exposure to high levels of radon gas can lead to lung cancer, both in smokers and in non-smokers. The only way to know the radon level in your home is to test.

“There are proven techniques for Manitobans looking to reduce the radon levels in their homes,” said Pam Warkentin of C-NRPP, a national certification program that provides certification for Radon Measurement and Mitigation professionals. “The most important thing they can do is test, and then contact a licensed contractor approved by C-NRPP.

“The introduction of Manitoba Hydro’s loan for radon mitigation is an important step towards increasing the availability of mitigation and the assurance to homeowners that they are dealing with a qualified professional trained in radon mitigation.”



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To access Manitoba Hydro's homeowner loan program please visit www.hydro.mb.ca/loans. To see a list of qualified measurement and mitigation professionals please visit www.c-nrpp.ca. Manitobans are reminded that if they proceed with radon mitigation with a contractor who is not certified or approved by Manitoba Hydro, they may not be eligible for the loan program and the contractor may not be trained appropriately in radon mitigation.

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