



Media Release

Record Fines for Safety Violation in 2003 Bloor Street West Explosion *Enbridge Gas Distribution Guilty Plea Ends 8 Year Prosecution*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Toronto, ON, December 16, 2011) – Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc. pled guilty today to a charge under the *Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000* (the Act) for its role in a natural gas explosion on April 24, 2003 at 3887 Bloor St. West in Toronto that killed seven people, seriously injured four others, destroyed a two-story commercial and residential building, and caused extensive damage to adjacent properties.

The Ontario Provincial Offences Court imposed a fine of \$350,000 plus a 25% victim surcharge of \$87,500 for a total fine of \$437,500 against Enbridge for failing to provide as accurate information as possible regarding the location of underground natural gas pipelines as required under the Act.

In addition, Enbridge and the locating company Precision Utility Ltd. also pled guilty to similar Ministry of Labour charges and were respectively fined an additional \$350,000 plus a 25% victim surcharge of \$87,500 and \$200,000 plus a 25% surcharge of \$50,000, for total additional fines of \$687,500.

“This is one of the largest fines imposed by the courts in TSSA’s history and ends TSSA prosecutions from the Bloor Street West explosion,” said Tom Ayres, Technical Standards and Safety Authority Vice President and General Counsel. “This fine sends a clear message that violations of Ontario’s safety regulations will not be tolerated and that TSSA will take whatever actions are necessary to ensure the safety of Ontarians.”

As Ontario’s fuels safety regulator, TSSA worked closely with the Office of the Chief Coroner, municipal officials, the Office of the Fire Marshal of Ontario, the Ministry of Labour, police, natural gas distributors and other experts in investigating this incident.

In November 2003, TSSA’s investigation resulted in four counts of safety violations under the Act against three companies: the utility, Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc.; the locating company, Precision Utility Ltd.; and the excavation firm, Warren Bitulithic Ltd. In September 2006, Warren Bitulithic Ltd. pled guilty to damaging an underground natural gas pipeline with a court ordered fine of \$225,000 plus a 25% victim surcharge of \$56,250 for a total of \$281,250.

Total fines from TSSA and Ministry of Labour prosecutions related to the Bloor St. West incident levied by the court today amount to \$1.1 million. With the inclusion of the September 2006 fine, the total amount of fines for safety violations is \$1.4 million.

“This incident should never have occurred and would not have occurred had the safety rules been followed,” said TSSA’s President and CEO, Kathy Milsom. “Today’s fines will never fully compensate for the deaths, injuries and property damage that occurred, but will hopefully deter violators from acting carelessly. Our deepest sympathies go out to the families and friends of the victims of this terrible tragedy.”

TSSA is continually improving natural gas line safety through enforcement activities and greater safety education and training for workers and the public who are working with, or near natural gas pipelines. Since its establishment in 1997, TSSA has nearly tripled its number of fuel safety inspectors. It has delivered training for safe digging around pipelines and has led efforts through industry to develop strategies to prevent pipeline incidents throughout the province.



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About TSSA

The Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) is an innovative, not-for-profit, organization dedicated to enhancing public safety. Throughout Ontario, TSSA regulates the safety of amusement devices, boilers and pressure vessels, elevating devices, fuels, operating engineers, ski lifts, and upholstered and stuffed articles. Its range of safety services include public education and consumer information, certification, licensing and registration, engineering design review, inspections, investigations, safety management consultation, and enforcement and prosecution activities. The organization's vision is to be a valued advocate and recognized authority in public safety.

-30-

For more information, please contact:

Wilson Lee

TSSA Spokesperson

Telephone: 416-734-3455 or wlee@tssa.org

For more information on the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, please visit www.tssa.org.