

# A billion reasons for cleaning up our harbour

**BY ERIC McGUINNESS**

Cleaning up Hamilton's image by cleaning up the harbour is worth nearly \$1 billion.

That's the value a new computer model puts on the benefits that will flow from improving the harbour enough to take it off the International Joint Commission's list of Great Lakes pollution hot spots.

The model developed by York University for Environment Canada identifies direct economic gains for the port, industry and tourism, but says reducing the city's stigma as a dirty, industrial city is worth much more.

Stakeholders told researchers the anticipated benefits "include an enhanced ability of key local industries, such as steel and health care, to attract recruits for high-end jobs, currently a critical issue for these organizations."

They said a better image will boost property values, spur downtown growth and help McMaster University attract top students and researchers. They also expect environmental improvements will lead to more recreational opportunities.

Benefits of containing toxic sediment at Randle Reef are put at \$126 million, but the biggest gains – worth more than \$900 million – won't be seen until the harbour ecosystem is delisted by the IJC. The harbour remedial action plan aims for that by 2015.

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