

Position Statement - November 2012¹

Stop Making It

1. The first priority of responsible waste management is reduction at source. The reduction and elimination of high-level radioactive waste production, however, has not been prioritized or even meaningfully considered by the federal government or Canadian waste producers.
2. Canada can and should eliminate high-level radioactive waste production. Numerous studies show that the replacement of aging nuclear reactors with other energy sources and a shift towards 100% renewable energy - coupled with conservation - is possible and cost effective.

Geological Disposal

3. There is no geological repository for nuclear fuel waste operating anywhere in the world. Despite decades of study, the technical case has not been made for geological disposal, and numerous technical challenges persist.
4. As concluded in the Seaborn Panel Report in 1998, neither the safety nor the acceptability of deep geological disposal of radioactive waste was established to the satisfaction of that federal environmental assessment panel after reviewing the evidence presented during a ten-year review of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited's *Nuclear Fuel Waste Management and Disposal Concept*, which relied on geological disposal.
5. Given that waste continues to be generated while the case for a socially accepted or technically proven long-term management option has not been convincingly made, nuclear waste management should be based on surface and/or near-surface monitored and retrievable storage at or close to its current location.

Nuclear Waste Management Organization

6. The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) is an industrial association of the generators and owners of nuclear fuel waste, (namely New Brunswick Power, Hydro Quebec and Ontario Power Generation (OPG) - the three provincial utilities who own 98% of Canada's high level nuclear waste). This is in direct contrast to the Seaborn Panel recommendations that an "at arm's length" agency be formed, independent of the nuclear industry, with a board of directors representative of independent "key stakeholders".
7. The Nuclear Fuel Waste Act provides the NWMO with a mandate to address nuclear fuel waste from previous and currently operating nuclear reactors in Canada. The NWMO is exceeding their mandate by seeking to incorporate into their program fuel waste from as-yet-unbuilt and unapproved new reactor designs that produce more toxic and long-lived radioactive wastes and by assuming responsibilities from OPG for the management of low and intermediate level nuclear waste.
8. The NWMO's approach to "consulting" with Canadians has been flawed in each phase of the NWMO's endeavours to date. The NWMO failed to meet the requirements of the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act in developing its preferred option of "Adaptive Phased Management", has lacked openness and transparency, and has not fulfilled its duty to consult with Canada's indigenous peoples.
9. If the NWMO proceeds to site a centralized nuclear waste facility there will be risks to communities along the transportation route. These risks will increase if nuclear waste production is allowed to continue. Communities along a potential transport route should have veto power over the route and should have access to funding from proponents via a neutral third-party for independent research and community education to support their community decision-making.
10. A community selected by the NWMO as a site for a geological repository and those living in the area should have veto power that extends beyond the completion of final studies and any environmental assessment, impact assessment or evaluation.

Export and Import of Nuclear Waste

11. The Canadian Government should guarantee that Canada will not import or export radioactive waste, including through any bilateral agreements or as a result of participation in any multi or bilateral agreements or partnerships.

¹ This statement updates the Nuclear Waste Watch Position Statement of 2003.



NUCLEAR WASTE WATCH

A Network of Organizations Concerned about High Level Radioactive Waste and Nuclear Power in Canada

The following organizations have endorsed the 2012 Position statement and the Nuclear Waste Watch letter to federal minister of Natural Resources the Hon. Joe Oliver and open letter to communities being investigated by the Nuclear Waste Management Organization as possible burial sites for all of Canada's high level nuclear fuel waste:

Bruce Peninsula Environment Group (ON)
Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility/
Le regroupement pour la surveillance du nucléaire (QC)
Canadian Environmental Law Association (ON)
Citizens Environment Alliance of Southwestern Ontario (ON)
Coalition for a Liveable Sudbury (ON)
Committee for Future Generations (SK)
Concerned Citizens Committee of Manitoba (MB)
CCNB Action (NB)
CCNB Action, Saint John Fundy Chapter (MB)
Council of Canadians (CDA)
Durham Nuclear Awareness (ON)
Environment North (ON)
Families Against Radiation Exposure (FARE) (ON)
Great Lakes United (INT)
Greenpeace Canada (CDA)
Huron Grey Bruce Citizens Committee on Nuclear Waste (ON)
Inter-Church Uranium Committee Educational Cooperative (SK)
International Institute of Concern for Public Health (CDA)
Inverhuron Committee (ON)
Metis Nation-Saskatchewan Local 108 Fish Lake (SK)
National Council of Women of Canada (CDA)
Nipissing Environment Watch (ON)
Northwatch (ON)
Nuclear Free Sudbury (ON)
Physicians for Global Survival (INT)
Port Hope Community Health Concerns Committee (ON)
Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (ON)
Sierra Club Canada (CDA)
Sierra Club Ontario (ON)
Temiskaming Environmental Action Committee (ON)
Women's Healthy Environments Network (WHEN) (ON)