

NUCLEAR WASTE WATCH **ACTION DÉCHETS NUCLÉAIRES**

November 15, 2012

The Honourable Joe Oliver
Minister of Natural Resources
Government of Canada
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

Ten years ago today the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act was passed into law. On this decade anniversary, we are calling on you to review the legislation and its implementation in a timely, open and transparent manner, taking into consideration the views and experiences of Canadians who will be potentially affected by its outcomes, namely through the transport of high level nuclear waste through their community or its burial beneath their homes.

The undersigned 31 organizations represent a broad spectrum of community, health, environmental, faith and public interests.

Our call for a review of the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act is motivated by our concern about the key outcomes to date of the NFWA, namely the creation of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization and their 2007 “Adaptive Phased Management Plan”, which is a plan through which the NWMO intends to identify and contract with a community to make itself the recipient of all of Canada’s nuclear fuel waste, for either burial or reprocessing. In 2007 your predecessor, The Honourable Gary Lunn, announced that the Government of Canada had accepted the Nuclear Waste Management Organizations (NWMO) recommended approach for managing used nuclear fuel in Canada, which the NWMO has captioned “Adaptive Phased Management”.

In your statement on the 2008-2010 Triennial Report of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization you emphasized how important it is that the NWMO work in an open and transparent manner. In fact, you described it as an *imperative*. In your statement on the NWMO 2011 Annual Report said that transparency was *key*. We agree. However, our experience as concerned organizations and potentially affected citizens is that this has not been the case.

Throughout these first five years of implementing the plan approved by your Government in 2007, we have observed an organization which keeps private its schedule of “public” events, did not disclose which communities it was in discussion with even to members of that community, and does consistently not respond to questions from the public. Even in its 2011 Annual Report, submitted to you in March 2012, the NWMO’s reporting of the communities with which it is engaged and the manner in which it is engaging them was misleading by omission.

Recognizing that conducting a review of the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act will require several months from initiation to completion, we are asking that you take more immediate corrective action as an interim step, and that you announce your commitment to doing as an addendum to your May 2012 statement in response to the NWMO’s 2011 Annual Report. We ask that you:

- Direct the NWMO to act in an open and transparent manner, including through disclosure of its community engagement activities and maintaining on its web site a list of communities at any stage in the NWMO siting process and related NWMO activities
- Create a third-party agency – arm’s length from the nuclear industry – to provide independent peer review of the NWMO’s technical work and scientific statements
- Ensure that the Nuclear Fuel Waste Bureau meets its mandate of informing and consulting the general public on an ongoing basis to enhance the participation of interested stakeholders

- Confirm that interactions between the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) and the Nuclear Waste Management Organization in no manner constitute a pre-approval of any eventual design for which the NWMO may seek approval from the CNSC and that records of all meetings and exchanges of information are placed on the public record

We would be pleased to meet with you to discuss our request for action and our rationale for each of the above-noted areas that require your attention.

Thank you for your attention and action. We look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,



Theresa McClenaghan
Canadian Environmental Law Association



Brennain Lloyd
Northwatch

On behalf of Nuclear Waste Watch:

- Bruce Peninsula Environment Group (ON)
- Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility
- 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)