

Final Report on NWMO Engagements Regarding the NWMO Proposed Site Selection Process

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nwmo

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MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION

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Regarding the NWMO Proposed Site Selection Process

December 15, 2009

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1.0 Overview of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) was established in 2002 by Ontario Power Generation Inc., Hydro-Québec and New Brunswick Power Corporation in accordance with the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act (NFWA) to assume responsibility for the long-term management of Canada's used nuclear fuel.

On June 14, 2007, the Government of Canada selected the NWMO's recommendation for Adaptive Phased Management (APM). APM moves towards a goal that Canadians themselves identified: safe and secure long-term containment and isolation of used nuclear fuel produced in Canada, with flexibility for future generations to act in their own best interests. The NWMO now has the mandate to implement the recommendation.

Mandate

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) was established in 2002 under the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act (NFWA)* to investigate approaches for managing Canada's used nuclear fuel, a by-product of the generation of electricity in a nuclear power plant. If not managed properly, used nuclear fuel is hazardous to people and the environment for a very long time. Currently, nuclear power plants are operating in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick.

The *NFWA* required electricity generating companies which produce used nuclear fuel to establish a waste management organization to provide recommendations to the Government of Canada on the long-term management of used nuclear fuel.

The legislation also required the nuclear fuel waste owners to establish segregated trust funds to finance the long term management of the used fuel. These funds were established in 2002. Contributions are made annually by the waste owners and audited financial statements are posted on the NWMO website.

The *NFWA* required the Nuclear Waste Management Organization to establish an Advisory Council whose comments on the organization's study and triennial reports must be made public.

Within three years of the legislation coming into force, the NWMO was required to submit to the Minister of Natural Resources proposed approaches for the management of used nuclear fuel, along with comments of the Advisory Council, and a recommended approach. The NWMO conducted its study over three years and presented its report and recommended approach to the Minister of Natural Resources Canada in November 2005.

The legislation authorized the Government of Canada to decide on the approach. In June 2007, the government selected Adaptive Phased Management (APM), the approach recommended by the NWMO. The organization is now responsible for implementing APM, subject to all the necessary regulatory approvals.

2.0 Purpose of Engagements

The purpose of these dialogue sessions was to provide introductory information about the Nuclear Waste Management Organization's (NWMO) proposed process for selecting a site to the Métis citizens of Saskatchewan.

3.0 How to Participate

The Métis Nation – Saskatchewan has hosted four facilitated dialogue sessions for Métis citizens in Regina (October 23, 24), Prince Albert (October 26, 27), North Battleford (October 28, 29) and Ile à la Crosse (December 2). A final workshop for updating citizens on what was heard at the first phase of engagements and to coordinate a way to move forward with future engagements was held in Saskatoon (December 5). Métis citizens can visit www.mn-s.ca for more information about the dialogue sessions.

Participants could respond to the interim discussion paper (presented on December 5) through the Department of Duty to Consult and Accommodate by emailing nswain@mn-s.ca. Written submissions were to be mailed to:

Métis Nation – Saskatchewan
Department of Duty to Consult and Accommodate
PO Box 30093
1624 – 33rd St W
Saskatoon, SK S7L 7M6

All comments were to be submitted **by December 15, 2009**. A draft copy of this report was posted on the MN-S web site along with supporting documentation. MN-S staff will attempt to circulate copies throughout as many Métis communities as possible. The final report is to be drafted by December 31 to submit to the NWMO to be included in their yearend report.

The Métis Nation – Saskatchewan reached out to Métis communities for their input throughout these dialogue sessions. In addition, copies of this discussion paper were provided to all Métis delegates from across the province that attended Phase 2. Future meetings will be held throughout the province to continue educating Métis citizens about the proposed project.

For further information on the dialogue sessions or the NWMO's proposed process for site selection, Métis citizens may call (306) 343-8285 or email us at nswain@mn-s.ca.

4.0 Preamble¹

The Métis Nation – Saskatchewan, in exercising its due diligence to consult with Métis citizens across the province, has signed a short-term funding agreement with the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) in which the NWMO will provide funding assistance for a series of engagements with Métis citizens throughout the province this Fall.

The NWMO was established in 2002 in accordance with the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act* to study, recommend and implement an approach for the long-term management of used nuclear fuel in Canada.

In accordance with Section 12 (7) of the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act*, the NWMO must “consult with the general public and in particular aboriginal peoples, on each of the proposed approaches. The study must include a summary of the comments received by the [NWMO] as a result of those consultations”.

In 2005, the Métis National Council signed an agreement with the NWMO and Natural Resources Canada to conduct a series of national consultations with each provincial Métis governing body. These consultations included the provinces of BC, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan was unable to participate in the national engagements, and has therefore been approached by the NWMO to conduct a series of regional consultations throughout the Province of Saskatchewan for Métis citizens. These consultations are strictly for the purpose of discussing site selection criteria, not selecting sites.

The Métis Nation – Saskatchewan has an obligation to participate in these engagements and goes into this extensive environmental project with a neutral position on used fuel storage in Saskatchewan. The purpose of these engagements is to begin dialogue and allow for Métis citizens of Saskatchewan to have a voice during the NWMO’s compilation of site selection criteria.

It is the understanding of the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan that the NWMO has not yet commenced the site selection process, and that there are several ‘nuclear’ provinces undergoing the same engagement and feedback process. It is also understood, that the NWMO does not have the intention of taking the initial site selection upon themselves, but must receive an expression of interest, willingness and understanding from a community of interest. Therefore, the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan fully supports an opportunity to provide all available information to its citizens, so that they themselves can make a fully informed decision.

Should the NWMO ever receive an expression of interest from a community in Saskatchewan, the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan is confident that the consultations and technical review, which will be done in cooperation with all impacted parties, will be conducted without bias and with the utmost consideration and respect for all Métis citizens of Saskatchewan.

¹ Métis Nation – Saskatchewan Press Release August 14, 2009.

5.0 Introduction

On July 30, 2009 the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan (MN-S) and the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) signed a contribution agreement in which the NWMO would provide funding for the MN-S to “design, develop and deliver a series of five regional dialogues in two phases with Métis Nation – Saskatchewan member regions on the NWMO proposed process for selecting a site”².

Four engagements (Phase 1) were designed to include all of the twelve MN-S regions of Saskatchewan and to ensure maximum participation of Métis citizens of the Province. The NWMO would be present for the Phase 1 engagements to provide information and an introduction to the proposed site selection process. A final engagement (Phase 2) was designed to allow Métis citizens to return to a forum after having time to review the information from Phase 1. The NWMO would not be present for Phase 2 allowing for open and frank discussion amongst Métis citizens in a roundtable format.

Phase 1

Throughout the month of October 2009 MN-S Regional Directors and Local Presidents were invited via telephone, fax and e-mail to attend a series of engagements across the Province. It was confirmed that all twelve Regional Directors were notified. The success of contacting all the approximate 133 MN-S Locals may have been inadequate due to improper Local contact information in the MN-S administration, or by internal Regional Council communication deficiencies.

Phase 2

On December 5th, 2009 MN-S staff coordinated a workshop in Saskatoon, SK where over 120 delegates attended from across the province. The majority of delegates had attended Phase 1 engagements. Delegates were presented with a package containing the interim report from Phase 1 and the NWMO’s publication on the site selection process “Moving Forward”. Other materials available included the NWMO’s DVD and additional brochures on safety, environment and radiation.

MN-S staff gave a presentation summarizing the Phase 1 engagements, the NWMO’s draft proposal for site selection criteria and how to move toward the next steps. The second portion of the day consisted of two breakout sessions where each table was presented with a discussion question. Tables were given five to ten minutes to discuss the topic and record their discussion points. After discussions each table sent a representative to the microphone to share their notes.

The following sections of this report outline the main comments and recommendations presented to MN-S staff during both phases of engagement with Métis citizens of Saskatchewan from October through to December 2009.

² NWMO Purchase Order and Contract dated July 30, 2009.

6.0 Questions and Recommendations

6.1 Theme One - Education

Questions:

1. Who would fund more education?
2. What do the Métis people need to learn more about?
 1. How should that information be taught?
 2. Why is the NWMO DVD in four languages, but not Michif?
 3. Can we implement this into our school curriculum?
 4. Can we have funding to have someone come in and educate each community?
 5. Can we hire some technical people to help coordinate more engagements in the community?

Recommendations:

1. Need more education at every Region/Local;
2. Should implement into school curriculum at all levels, K – College;
3. Should be taught in traditional languages, Cree, Michif, etc.;
4. Focus on educating the youth and the elders;
5. Elders should vote – trust is there;
6. Need more time to educate the people;
7. Further the information of our people, which will ensure our voice is heard, respected and accommodated;
8. Training should be offered up North;
9. NWMO should contact GDI for help in getting their DVDs and media into traditional languages;
10. We need more balanced information, should be gathered and provided. Right now the information is provided by the industry;
11. Would like to see a significant amount of NWMO money go towards education. Educate the province on nuclear waste. Perhaps a specific class in school;
12. Need more consultations;
13. Need to put in a program at SUNTEP, Métis training, in our affiliates to better educate;
14. NWMO must meet with the communities;
15. We need written information that can be easily read and understood by all people; and
16. Will require hard, unbiased data.

6.2 Theme Two – Health & Safety

Questions:

1. Statistics on health affects? Workers? Communities?
2. What is the cancer risk?
3. Does NWMO guarantee **NO** accidents or health affects?
4. Will there be insurance available for workers? Communities?
5. If health is affected is there Government support, since the community has “volunteered” to host the nuclear site?
6. Who decides what the safety concerns are?
7. How will we monitor water contamination?
8. If an accident happened – what is the area affected?
9. The book says there are potential health risks for thousands of years but the presenter is saying one hundred years, why?
10. What are our rights? Medical care?
11. What will the workers do with their clothing?
12. How to avoid negative industry impacts such as oil sands and current and past uranium mines?

Recommendations:

1. Need more information on health and hazards of nuclear wastes;
2. A well informed public means a good decision can be made;
3. Keep away from main roads, back roads;
4. This is a global issue, we need equal benefits;
5. Must be concerned about our water;
6. Transportation is dangerous and communities should be cautioned;
7. Concerned about health compensation;
8. If nuclear waste is not suitable for your own family, it shouldn't be suitable for anybody else;
9. People need to be informed about potential health costs of working in the nuclear industry;
10. Improvements for safety: road improvements, high security around the burial;
11. Proper authorities and qualified staff/supervision;
12. Need clear, concise framework;
13. Want a closer look into storage procedures; and
14. Need to make sure the community can be insured from nuclear accidents; family compensation.

6.3 Theme Three – Environment

Questions:

1. Affects on the environment?
2. Will this endanger wildlife populations?
3. Will the animals be unfit for human consumption?
4. Will the plant life/berries be unfit for human and wildlife consumption?
5. How will the community be affected in the future?
6. How much nuclear waste do we have in SK to get rid of? Canada?
7. How come when the nuclear reactors were built there was no sought out method to safe waste disposal?
8. Where does the used water go?
9. How is waste being stored right now?
10. After the repository is built, is it federal property?
11. Is lighting around the facility going to affect the environment?
12. Current nuclear waste storage is risky because it is so close to the lake and terrorists could destroy it and create a lot of damage. What steps will be taken to prevent this?
13. How will we protect our uranium? We need to respect it and not throw it around.
14. Do we know how many places in SK are suitable for waste?
15. What stage is the environmental impact studies implemented in this process?

Recommendations:

1. Environmental studies to be sure of how it will impact the future generations;
2. Make sure waste site is a suitable distance away from communities, water ways, streams, lakes, etc.;
3. Take into consideration the gathering of food, plants, animals, etc.;
4. Need engineers to determine the effects on our land;
5. Transportation a very serious concern because of the narrow roads, fuel trucks are having spills already;
6. We need to make sure we have traditional land use mapping to let industry and government know that this is where we live. They need to consult with us. We will have a better argument if we have a map; and
7. We want to keep ownership of our research and Intellectual Property Rights.

6.4 Theme Four – The Future

Questions:

1. How will our children/grandchildren be affected?
2. What are the future affects for the land in our communities?
3. What are the future affects for the wildlife/plants?
4. What happens when contracts are over and jobs and money leave the community, how will that affect the citizens of the community and surrounding areas?
5. What are the long term benefits?
6. What kinds of jobs are available now and in the future for the people of the communities?
7. What is the projected space needed to store future waste?
8. Are the jobs going to us?
9. Are the good jobs going to be filled by Aboriginal peoples?
10. What is the rush if this is a 30 – 40 year process?
11. Who funds NWMO?
12. How can communities be supported?
13. What is the future of nuclear industry in Saskatchewan? And how do we fit into the process?
14. What are we going to get out of it? Our communities are in need of community development.
15. How long does this nuclear waste last?
16. With the process so long, is it really workable?
17. After the site is selected, will the community have the right to cap how much waste they want to take on?

Recommendations:

1. Environmentalists to educate us on risks and long term affects of nuclear waste;
2. Need more time to digest and learn this information, and then pass it on;
3. Want more community engagements;
4. We want to set the stage for future engagements/consultations;
5. Needs to be a community driven process;
6. Let's talk about things we want. Our rights, our history and the future;
7. Effects on the community, population during and after the boom;
8. Hope grandchildren will get good jobs; and
9. Any proposal must include long term, professional jobs with adequate training.

6.5 Theme Five – The People

Questions:

1. In mixed communities, who is the priority to choose this?
2. Why is NWMO coming to the Aboriginal now? Is it DTC?
3. Who does NWMO consider Aboriginal?
4. Do they consider addressing the non-status?
5. Why is there no coverage of this on the news? No advertising?
6. What happens if NWMO cannot find a site?
7. Can the Métis strike up a committee on nuclear waste and educate the public?
8. Does Nignai have its own budget and staff?
9. How will the communities benefit? Or will they?
10. How can communities be supported?
11. Who are the board or directors of NWMO?
12. Do the northern Métis know about NWMO site selection?

Recommendations:

1. We have to make an agreement between Métis and First Nations to agree on territorial rights;
2. At some point somewhere in Canada - nuclear waste is going to affect Métis people;
3. Elders from NWMO elder's forum (Nigani) should also inform their communities;
4. Need more Métis people to participate;
5. The Métis need to be partners with the Government;
6. Need an independent committee;
7. Need more outreach – a poll?
8. Compile and provide our members with an overview of these concerns (final report);
9. Community has to make the decision, not the politicians;
10. Needs to be community driven;
11. Want input in the process instead of being told what the process is;
12. Need good information supported by Métis experts;
13. Train the Métis people – let's take our time;
14. Nigani members should be from all areas of the province so everyone can access elders for advice/wisdom;
15. The Métis should have a technical advisor who works in the best interest of the Métis Nation and on behalf of the Métis citizens;
16. Would like to have an environmental scientist and a geologist to listen to;
17. Need direction and information from Métis citizens and Locals;
18. Need to listen to each other;
19. Need more Métis people to participate;
20. Cluff/Key Lake: Northern Saskatchewan resident's recommendations were not honoured;
21. Many people protested against the uranium mining but it still went ahead; and
22. Young people need to have/get the training and jobs.