

The Honourable Christian Paradis
Minister, Natural Resources Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

March 2010

Dear Minister Paradis:

Congratulations on your recent appointment as Minister of Natural Resources for Canada. I am pleased to write you on behalf of the Advisory Council to the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) to outline some of our activities over the past year.

Throughout 2009, much of our focus was on the NWMO's collaborative development of a process to identify an informed and willing community to host a deep geological repository for Canada's used nuclear fuel. We are pleased that the NWMO has taken the time to develop the site selection process collaboratively through public engagement in 2008 and 2009, and believe the process is founded on principles that are based on expectations of Canadians. The organization is moving forward in an orderly way.

As the proposed process was being drafted, we encouraged the NWMO to expand its description of Adaptive Phased Management (APM) – Canada's plan for the long-term care of used nuclear fuel – and make a strong case for the approach, with particular emphasis on its adaptability. We also emphasized the importance of complementary information materials to support site selection, in particular, to elaborate on the anticipated economic benefits and community impacts of the project, both positive and negative, over the different stages of its implementation.

The Advisory Council closely scrutinized the NWMO's 2009 engagement program which invited public review and comment on the draft siting process. The Council was pleased with the engagement program that sought input through a range of public sessions, dialogues and citizen panels. We stressed the importance of providing opportunities for youth input because of the intergenerational nature of long-term used nuclear fuel management. In this regard, we were pleased that the NWMO established a Youth Roundtable in 2009 and impressed by the quality of counsel offered by the Roundtable. We were encouraged that members of youth organizations participated in dialogues on the siting process.

Toward the end of 2009, the Council reviewed and commented on the communications and engagement plans for initiating the process to identify a central site for a deep geological repository. Members agree that a measured and gradual launch will be appropriate. The Advisory Council has underscored the importance of governments, federal and provincial, being active and supportive participants in the implementation of the site selection process.

.../2

We are regularly briefed on the NWMO's continued relationship building and engagement. We note that the NWMO's establishment of a Municipal Forum is making an important contribution to the NWMO's work. With representation from associations nationally and in the nuclear provinces, the Forum provides a valuable two-way communication link between the NWMO and urban and rural communities.

We continue to strongly support the Aboriginal dimension of the NWMO's work, and the many ways the organization has sought to interweave Traditional Knowledge and the advice of the Elders Forum and its working group, Niigani. The NWMO's innovative process, including its consideration of the "seven generations" concept, goes beyond standard western policy-making and may become a template for future relationships between traditional cultures and Canadians.

Of particular interest to the Advisory Council is the involvement of interested and potentially affected Aboriginal peoples early on in the siting process. We made a number of recommendations to support this, including that the NWMO identify how it, along with its siting partner, will integrate Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge once siting has begun.

The Advisory Council is regularly briefed on the NWMO's technical program. We are impressed with the positive progress report it received from the Independent Technical Review Group.

The NWMO will present to you its first triennial report next year. The Advisory Council has begun preparing to submit its independent comments for submission at the same time, as required by the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act*. We look forward to offering an independent review of the progress that has been made during the first three years of implementing Canada's plan for the safe and secure long-term management of its used nuclear fuel.

Sincerely, on behalf of the members of the Advisory Council,



The Honourable David Crombie,
Advisory Council Chairman

c.c. David Cameron
Frederick Gilbert
Donald Obonsawin

Rudyard Griffiths
Eva Ligeti
Marlyn Cook

Dougal McCreath
Derek Lister