

Minister's Statement on NWMO 2008 Annual Report

Natural Resources Canada
June 24, 2009

On March 26, 2009, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) submitted its annual report for 2008, entitled *Moving Forward Together*, as required by the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act*.

I am pleased to note the progress the organization has made over the past year toward the implementation of the Adaptive Phased Management (APM) approach to managing Canada's nuclear fuel waste, in particular its efforts to involve Canadians in this important work. The development of a safe, secure, long-term approach to nuclear fuel waste management is a matter of concern to all Canadians, and it is essential that all Canadians have an opportunity to understand and comment on the issues involved.

For this reason, the NWMO's implementation of the APM approach must be based on a consultative process involving Canadian stakeholders, including Aboriginal peoples.

I congratulate the NWMO on its success to date in identifying and addressing opportunities to increase awareness of its activities, and I encourage the NWMO to continue to explore and develop new and creative ways to inform and engage Canadians.

I am especially pleased by the NWMO's recognition of the importance of engaging young people in the consultative process. The implementation of the APM approach will unfold over many decades, and now is the time to begin building long-term relationships with the decision-makers of the future. The creation of a youth roundtable by the NWMO, to explore how best to involve young Canadians in the process, is a good first step in that direction.

As Canada's premier organization responsible for managing all nuclear fuel waste, the NWMO requires a wide range of capabilities. The organization must be able to continue to attract and retain people with the skills and qualifications to meet the current and future challenges for the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste. It must also ensure it has access to high-quality, independent technical advice and expertise.

To this end, I welcome the NWMO's creation of an Independent Technical Review Group in October 2008. This group consists of experts from Canada and abroad in technologies related to the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste, and continues the organization's efforts to improve information sharing, and to obtain the best independent technical advice.

The Government of Canada continues to monitor the activities of the NWMO with great care and attention to ensure that the organization fulfils its responsibilities under the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act*. This is part of our government's commitment to protecting the health and safety of Canadians and our environment.

The NWMO and Canada continue to move forward with an approach to managing our nuclear fuel waste which is both safe and secure and protects Canadians and the environment.

The Honourable Lisa Raitt
Minister of Natural Resources