

Understanding the Choices – The Future Management of Canada’s Used Nuclear Fuel.

NWMO Information Session Final Summary Report

**October 4-5, 2004
Bécancour
3025 Nicolas-Perrot**

1.0 PARTICIPANTS

There were 12 participants at the Information Session.

Pat Patton represented the NWMO and Tony Hodge represented the Assessment Team. Anita Ramacière and Alexandre Ramacieri, from DPRA Canada, were present.

This document presents the comments made during the Information Session in Bécancour.

2.0 MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the three management approaches?

2.1 Storage at the Reactor Sites.

2.1.1 Strengths

The simplicity in of site selection seems to have been the most convincing argument in favor of management at the reactor sites.

Many participants thought that the community would be more favourable to the presence of spent nuclear fuel in the region, since it is already used to the presence of nuclear facilities.

There seems to exist strong ties linking the community to the nuclear site. These ties have developed into a feeling of responsibility towards the use of nuclear energy. Since the community gained from the presence of the nuclear site, many participants were favourable to the idea of managing Gentilly’s waste at the site.

2.1.2 Weaknesses

The only concern that was raised had to do with the size that the infrastructures required for managing the waste would have.

2.2 Deep Geological Disposal

2.2.1 Strengths

The same argument of simplicity was raised concerning this approach. Here, it was mentioned that fewer operations would be required to manage the fuel from across Canada.

Many participants thought Hydro-Quebec and therefore Quebec, would gain more by taking advantage of a centralized site, since management of the spent fuel would not be the responsibility of Hydro-Quebec.

For many participants, this approach seemed the most responsible on a long term basis. For them, this approach represents a stronger commitment towards future generations and is the best way to fully assume the responsibility for managing nuclear waste.

2.2.2 Weaknesses

It seemed obvious to many that the choice of a site would be very complicated. A participant noticed that it would be difficult to find a site that would satisfy everybody.

The participants wondered about the reversibility of such an approach. The question was also raised about what would become of the fuel produced after the cavity is sealed.

2.3 Centralized Storage

2.3.1 Strengths

No strength was specifically mentioned concerning this approach.

2.3.2 Weaknesses

The weaknesses noted by the participants were similar to those raised concerning deep geological disposal.

Site selection could be very complicated. A participant noticed that centralized storage does not measure up as well with respect to environmental concerns.

3.0 THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

**Is the assessment framework exhaustive and balanced? Is anything missing?
If so, what should be added?**

No comments were made on the analysis framework. On the other hand, there was interest for the contributions of First Nations representatives.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

**In your opinion, what specific elements should be included in the implementation plan?
What elements do you feel should be included?**

There were questions raised about setting precise deadlines for the long term. A participant understood that the approaches would not be implemented right away, but insisted on the

importance of setting a precise schedule so that citizens may follow the evolution of waste management.

5.0 Other Comments to Be Made on the Information Contained in Discussion Document No. 2

Regarding the document « Understanding the Choices », the following comments were made:

No comments were made regarding Discussion Document No. 2.

6.0 Other Comments

Many participants questioned the relevance of using nuclear energy.

The participants underestimated the duration of the danger, although they understood the risks associated with the spent fuel. Therefore, the participants had a hard time understanding the long term implications of fuel management.

The participants did not understand why the Canadian Shield offered possibilities different from those of other geological formations. The participants had a limited understanding of the various geological formations.

Some participants thought that the waste could be processed.

Many participants thought that in a not so distant future, technological breakthroughs would allow the processing of nuclear waste or making it harmless. Therefore they conceived management of spent fuel with a different time frame than those who were looking for a solution for the duration of the radioactive life of the fuel.

Many were seeking reassurance from management approaches in Europe and in the United States.

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