

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

NWMO Discussion Session Final Summary Report

**October 19, 2004
Bécancour
3025 Nicolas-Perrot**

1.0 PARTICIPANTS

There were 11 participants at the Discussion 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 Discussion 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

No comment.

2.1.2 Weaknesses

No comment.

2.2 Deep Geological Disposal

2.2.1 Strengths

No comment.

2.2.2 Weaknesses

A participant notes that the Seaborn Commission had rejected deep geological disposal. He wonders why the NWMO is reconsidering this approach.

A participant asks what would become of the site once it is filled up and sealed.

A participant insists on the importance of being able to adapt the management approach once it is implemented, which according to him, implies having access to the fuel at all times.

A participant is opposed to the transportation of fuel for either centralized storage or deep geological disposal.

2.3 Centralized Storage

2.3.1 Strengths

No comment.

2.3.2 Weaknesses

No comment.

3.0 THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

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

A participant questions the objective of building consensus on the choice of management options. He suggests not to wait for such a consensus to be brought about before making a decision on nuclear waste management.

A participant notes that the chosen approach should be the one that results in the least exposure of people to radiation.

A participant believes that the best choice would be the one that weighs less on future generations.

A participant warns of so called truths that we accept. He reminds us to question scientific truths that presently seem to attain consensus.

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?

According to one participant, nuclear power as an energy source is faced with perception problems. Nuclear waste management should thus proceed with as much transparency as possible.

It is suggested that a consultation of environmental groups should be organized.

A participant suggests that the decision not be taken by public decision makers and proposes that a referendum be held on the matter.

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:

A participant asks how each of the eight criteria will be weighted?

He is told that there will be no differentiation among criteria.

6.0 Other Comments

The effects of radiation on the environment and particularly on ground water give concerns to many participants.

Some participants would like to know why deep geological disposal was rejected as a management approach in many European countries.

A participant suggests that a temporary solution should be sought rather than a management solution for the radioactive life of the fuel.

Some questions are raised concerning the management approaches used in other countries.

According to one participant, the consultation should have taken place much earlier when the choice of using nuclear energy was made.

According to one participant, there exists in Quebec a consensus against the use of nuclear energy.

One participant asks why the present management methods would not be viable in the longer run.

One participant notes that it would be appropriate to consider longitudinal studies (throughout their development) of the effects of radiation when deciding what fuel management decision should be taken.

Some questions were raised on the subject of the independence of the NWMO in relation with the companies that generate nuclear waste.

The question was asked whether it is feasible to export our nuclear waste to the United States since they have already decided on a site to dispose of theirs.

Some would like to know who would be the owner of the fuel in an eventual centralized storage site.

A participant notes that nuclear energy is wrongly associated with nuclear technology for military use. Thus it is difficult to transmit neutral and objective information.

A participant suggests that a stronger attachment to nuclear energy can be noted among certain communities and that we should make the most of it. He suggests that these communities should be assumed more favorable to volunteering to manage the nuclear waste.

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