

# An open letter to the residents of Ignace, Dymont, Dinorwic and Wabigoon areas

## **Willing or not? Who should decide about nuclear waste burial in Northwestern Ontario?**

In August the **Township of Ignace**, the **Ignace Citizens Nuclear Liaison Committee (ICNLC)** and the **Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO)** released an [information package](#) and [short survey](#) to the residents of the Township of Ignace. There is no stated deadline for response, but according to the project [backgrounder](#) dated July 2021 input will be accepted for six months.

A few key points about the “**Ignace Willingness Project**”:

- ◆ Only the residents of the Township of Ignace are included in the decision-making process, despite the [potential site](#) being more than 40 km west of the Township of Ignace, upstream of the site and in a different watershed
- ◆ The proposal is that the [Ignace Citizens Nuclear Liaison Committee](#) will collect input from the residents of Ignace and then make a recommendation to Ignace Council; the [Ignace Township Council will make the decision on whether Ignace is “willing” or not](#)
- ◆ The options for collecting input are open to interpretation – coffee chats and newsletters, for example – and don’t include a referendum or vote or any other quantifiable way of measuring community acceptance

The [Ignace Willingness Project](#) is important because the NWMO has repeatedly said they will only move ahead with their nuclear waste burial project if they have an “[informed and willing community](#)”. A low response rate or responses that are open to interpretation could make it easier for the Township of Ignace to tell the NWMO that Ignace is that “informed and willing community”.

How should “willingness” be determined?

- **The decision cannot be left to Ignace alone.** Ignace is over 40 km upstream from the candidate site in the Revell Lake area. Downstream communities and those along the transportation route must be included.
- The question of “willingness” cannot be left open to interpretation. **Only a referendum or vote with a clearly worded question and a “yes” or “no” answer can actually measure “willingness”.**
- In the NWMO [siting process](#), **an environmental assessment will not be completed** until years after the decision about “willingness” and an agreement between the NWMO and the “host” community is formalized
- There is no complete description of the NWMO project. Many parts of the project, such as the used fuel packaging plant, are still not fully designed. Other parts, such as “shallow burial”, are optional but not included in most of the NWMO hand-out materials. The level of risk and of radioactive releases could change with different decisions the NWMO might make during the final project design, after “willingness” has been declared. **No community should be asked if it is “willing” to accept a project before they know fully and in detail what the project will include.**

### **What can you do?**

- Reply to the Township of Ignace survey; express your views, including on how you think a decision on “willingness” should be made.
- If you don’t live in Ignace, remind the Township of Ignace that they said they want to hear your views, but that the Township of Ignace does not represent you and has no authority outside their municipal boundaries
- If you disagree with the way “willingness” is being determined, tell the Nuclear Waste Management Organization directly. Let your Member of Parliament and your local municipal council or service board know your views.
- Join or organize a local or regional group who shares your concern, such as the newly formed Sunset Country Spirit Alliance based in Dryden or the northern Ontario alliance *We the Nuclear Free North*
- Get in touch with We the Nuclear Free North. Visit our [web site](#) for links to the Ignace “Willingness Project” information package and survey, for contact information for your local, provincial and federal government representatives, for details of upcoming webinars and meetings, and to learn more about the risks and realities of what the Nuclear Waste Management Organization is proposing for Northwestern Ontario

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*

Margaret Mead

Contact information is provided on the reverse side of this open letter.

## Contacts

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## Willing for what?

The nuclear power reactor operators in Canada, organized as the Nuclear Waste Management Organization, will decide by 2023 on whether to proceed with their candidate nuclear waste burial site between Ignace and Dryden in Northwestern Ontario. If constructed, the NWMO's proposed deep geological repository would receive daily shipments of highly radioactive nuclear waste for 45 years. Those living nearby, downstream, and along the transportation route would be at risk.

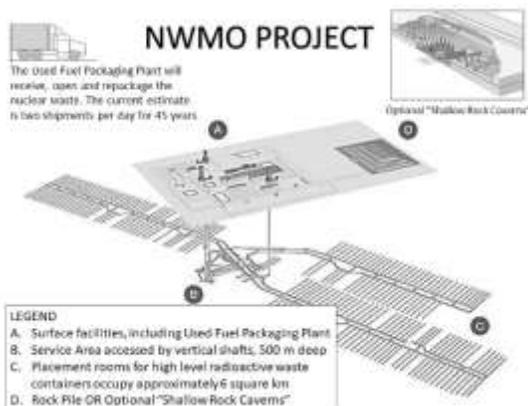
The Nuclear Waste Management Organization has repeatedly said they will only move ahead with their nuclear waste burial project if they have an "informed and willing community". The Township of Ignace has been involved with the Nuclear Waste Management Organization for ten years and has received several million dollars as a result of their participation.

Over the summer, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization, the Township of Ignace and the Ignace Citizens Nuclear Liaison Committee released a survey and an information package about "the Ignace Willingness Project". We have a number of concerns about the "Willingness Project". It does not include a referendum or vote and leaves communities and residents along the transportation route and downstream of the candidate site of the proposed deep geological repository out of the decision-making process. These and other concerns are outlined in the "Open letter to the residents of Ignace, Dymont, Dinowic and Wabigoon areas" on the reverse of this page.

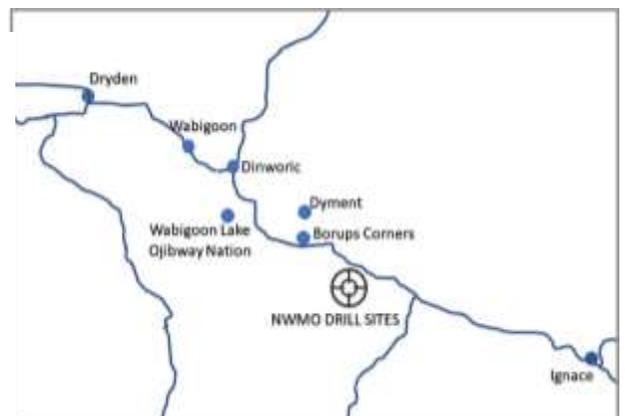
### We have three key concerns about the NWMO project:

- The NWMO is using the Township of Ignace as a proxy decision-maker, excluding residents and communities downstream from the site and along the transportation route. Ignace is more than 40 kilometres from the Revell area candidate site; Ignace should not be the decision-maker for all the communities downstream and along the transportation route
- The NWMO has reserved the option of bringing the radioactive waste to their selected site while they are still researching whether the geology of that site is appropriate. Under this option the NWMO would place the waste in what they call "shallow caverns". This "option" is often left out of NWMO descriptions. Other parts of the project are still in early design stages, such as the Used Fuel Packaging Plant, which has the potential to release radioactive contamination into the local area. The NWMO is looking for a community to say they are "willing and informed" before important information about the project is available
- There is no other operating deep geological repository for high level radioactive fuel waste anywhere in the world. If and when this experiment fails, the downstream waters are at risk; there are hundreds of thousands of people living downstream in the English River-Wabigoon and Turtle River-Lake of the Woods watersheds

Visit *We the Nuclear Free North's* web site for links to the Ignace "Willingness Project" information package and survey, for contact information for your representatives in local, provincial and federal government, for details of upcoming webinars and meetings, and to learn more about the risks and realities of what the Nuclear Waste Management Organization is proposing for Northwestern Ontario.



There is no deep geological repository for high level nuclear fuel waste approved or operating anywhere in the world.



Visit [www.wethenuclearfreenorth.ca](http://www.wethenuclearfreenorth.ca) to learn more. Call us at 1 855 225 8055 or email [nuclearfreenorth@gmail.com](mailto:nuclearfreenorth@gmail.com) to arrange a meeting or presentation or to receive an information package