

PETITION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ON ADOPTION OF THE PROXIMITY PRINCIPLE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF RADIOACTIVE WASTES

WHEREAS:

- Ontario Power Generation is the owner of more than 90% of high-level radioactive waste in Canada and is the major shareholder in the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO)
- The NWMO was created by the nuclear fuel waste owners in Canada in 2002 and has been engaged in a nine-step site selection process for a deep geological repository for all of Canada's high-level waste since 2002
- The NWMO's nine-step site selection has been highly divisive in the communities the NWMO has investigated and continues to be divisive in the areas of the two remaining sites under investigation (a site in South Bruce in Southwestern Ontario and a site between Ignace and Dryden in Northwestern Ontario)
- The NWMO is seeking a site to construct a deep geological repository for which it has presented a series of concepts but has no actual design and for which there is no precedent; there is no approved or operating deep geological repository for nuclear fuel waste anywhere in the world, despite more than five decades of effort by the nuclear industry
- The NWMO includes in their nine-step process the "option" of adding a temporary shallow repository while site characterization is underway to support predictions made in an earlier assessment for a deep geological repository; the shallow cavern option could be approved through a licence amendment without being subject to a full environmental assessment and would presuppose the outcomes of the geoscientific verification program
- The proposed transportation campaign to move nuclear fuel waste from reactor stations to a centralized location (i.e. the selected site for a deep geological repository) includes an estimated 2-3 road shipments per day for an estimated 50 years or more, which will result in significant expense and greenhouse gas emissions; this proposed transportation of the nuclear fuel waste presents significant dangers both to the environment and to the exposed public, including drivers and bystanders exposed to gamma radiation; these impacts could be greatly increased under accident conditions; if the NWMO opted to send high-level waste from Ontario reactors by rail each train would carry 14 containers weighing 100 tonnes each
- The NWMO proposes to transfer the wastes into transportation containers at the reactor stations and then transfer the waste again at the selected DGR site into a "final" container; the repackaging facility at the (theoretical) DGR site is still at the concept stage but repackaging will be technically difficult and presents a set of hazards for workers, potential impacts on human health, and the threat of contamination of air, ground and water with radioactive releases
- There is strong opposition to deep geological repositories in the areas under investigation, and this opposition has received significant international support from both citizens and scientists
- There is a viable alternative in the form of making on-site storage more robust and adopting a program of rolling stewardship for the long-term monitoring and management of radioactive waste at or near current locations
- The Proximity Principle directs that radioactive waste should be managed as close to the point of generation as is technically feasible; the Proximity Principle has been embedded in the European Community's Strategy for Waste Management since the 1990s and some jurisdictions, including Scotland and Wales, have a "Proximity Principle" included in their radioactive waste policy.

We the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

Adopt the Proximity Principle with respect to the management of radioactive wastes and direct Ontario Power Generation to further their development of robust extended storage systems at or near the point of generation.

