

Advisory Council to the
Nuclear Waste Management Organization

Record of Discussion: June 25th, 2003 Meeting

Record of discussion of the meeting of the Advisory Council to the Nuclear Waste Management Organization / Soci t  de gestion des d chets nucl aires (NWMO)

held at Toronto, Ontario, commencing at 12:30 p.m. and concluding at 5:00 p.m. on June 25th, 2003.

Present

Advisory Council:

David Crombie	Chairman
David Cameron	Member
Helen Cooper	Member
Gordon Cressy	Member
Fred Gilbert	Member
Derek Lister	Member
Donald Obonsawin	Member

Regrets

Daniel Rozon	Member
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Also in attendance:

NWMO:

Elizabeth Dowdeswell	President
Kathryn Shaver	Corporate Secretary
Anthony Hodge	Advisor to NWMO

1. Constitution of Meeting – Opening Remarks

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. and reviewed the Agenda for the June 25th meeting with Council.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

On motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the minutes of the Advisory Council meeting held on May 9th-10th 2003, a copy having been sent to each member of the Council, were approved as recorded.

3. NWMO Discussion Paper: Review of Draft Outline

The President introduced the draft Outline of Discussion Document 1 that had been distributed to the Advisory Council in advance of the June meeting.

- The Outline had been revised to address comments and suggestions from the Advisory Council provided on an earlier version at their May 2003 meeting.
- The President noted that while the Outline will continue to be refined, the NWMO was interested in Advisory Council input on the overall direction and focus proposed for the paper.
- Discussion Document 1 is targeted for release in late fall 2003.

The Chairman invited Council review and comment on each section of the draft Document Outline.

On describing the NWMO mandate:

- The Council encouraged clarity and emphasis in the Document to underscore that the NWMO is open to considering a range of management options. The Document should clarify that the NWMO study must address – but is not limited to -- the three approaches referenced in the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act.
- The Council also urged clarity on the NWMO's mandate, to communicate the specific scope of the NWMO's study and recommendations:
 - The NWMO's focus is specifically defined by legislation to consider alternative approaches for the long-term management of used nuclear fuel.
 - The NWMO is not mandated to advise on energy policy generally, or the future of nuclear power in Canada. The President assured the Council that the NWMO shall remain rigorously neutral on the future of nuclear energy.
 - Document should note that the federal government holds the policy-making and decision-making authority with respect to ultimate decisions on long-term nuclear waste management, taking into consideration the advice of the NWMO.
- In describing the NWMO process, the Council requested that the Document reference their independence in reviewing the NWMO study and providing comments to the Minister of Natural Resources Canada.

On the background context for the study:

- It was suggested that nuclear fuel waste be presented as one of many types of wastes which Canadians have to manage.
 - The specific characteristics of waste and the way it must be managed, reflects the specific characteristics of each particular waste stream.
 - In the case of used nuclear fuel, one of the key characteristics is the long-lived duration of the radioactivity. Other features could be noted, such as public fears over nuclear operations in light of past incidents and association with nuclear arms – all of which are important in influencing public perceptions.
- The historical context should be referenced, to illustrate that the dimensions of this challenge are exemplified by the experiences of the past. In this regard, Council members felt that reference to the process and specific findings of the Seaborn Panel would be important for laying the historical context around nuclear waste management.
- Having described some of the history around the policy work on this topic, the Document should then focus on the challenges facing the NWMO's study today, such as:
 - Changing societal ideas, values, concepts;
 - Importance of finding an approach with moral and ethical integrity and social acceptance; and
 - The long-lived nature of waste to be managed, and the considerable inter-generational implications of decisions taken.

On elements of the study:

- Council members agreed that the timeframes associated with radioactivity should be addressed in the Document. The discussion should explicitly acknowledge that the duration of the hazard of used nuclear fuel is a matter of some debate and scientific uncertainty.
- In signaling the scope of parameters to be considered in the analytical framework, it was suggested that the Document note explicitly:
 - the intention to integrate traditional knowledge and issues important to aboriginal communities as part of the study; and
 - the importance of addressing sustainability of social structures and governing bodies, and how they may change over long time horizons.

On structure:

- The President invited Advisory Council views on whether sample “discussion questions” are helpful in promoting engagement and dialogue, and if so, whether or not they should be included in Discussion Document 1.
 - Council members were supportive of the use of discussion questions.

- Council felt that the use of discussion questions in the paper would help to reinforce the two-way nature of the NWMO's interactive dialogue planned with the public.
 - Discussion questions would make it easier for the public to engage on a topic that is otherwise seen as complex.
 - It was suggested that questions or issues set out to focus discussion would promote reflection and possibly invite and trigger other issues in the public's mind. In this regard, it would be important for the NWMO to invite the public to flag other key questions and issues of importance to them.
- The Council encouraged the tailoring of complementary shorter summaries of the Discussion Document, pamphlets and other collateral material that would be appropriate for use in public dialogue with different communities of interest.
 - The Advisory Council was supportive of making public the intended path for the NWMO workplan through to November 2005. It was suggested that the Discussion Document might include a schematic representation of the study process, to help position the NWMO's call for engagement and flag to the public the various ongoing opportunities for input and participation.
 - The Council offered a number of other editorial suggestions for the document.

The President noted that the Board of Directors would be debriefed on the nature of the Advisory Council's comments on this draft Outline at the June 27th Board meeting.

Taking into consideration the comments from the Advisory Council, the NWMO will proceed to develop the paper, with a first draft planned for the end of August 2003.

4. Other Business

- Council registered interest in hearing from the NWMO at a future meeting on work under way to review issues raised by the Scientific Review Group of the Seaborn Panel, and the extent to which there are outstanding questions to be addressed. The President undertook to report on this at a future meeting.
- The President reported on plans in process for the Advisory Council's research visit to the U.S. Yucca Mountain Repository.

5. In Camera Discussion

The Advisory Council convened a closed session, in camera with the Chairman, commencing at 3:30 p.m. and concluding at 5:00 p.m.

Termination of Meeting

The Chairman declared the meeting terminated at 5:00 p.m.

Dated the 23rd day of September, 2003
Corporate Secretary