

Advisory Council to the
Nuclear Waste Management Organization

Record of Discussion: March 10, 2009 Meeting

Record of discussion of the meeting of the Advisory Council to the
Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) /
Société de gestion des déchets nucléaires (sgdn)

Convened at 22 St. Clair Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario,
commencing at 9:00 a.m. EST on March 10, 2009.

Advisory Council Members Present:

Hon. David Crombie Council Chairman
David Cameron
Marlyn Cook
Fred Gilbert
Rudyard Griffiths
Eva Ligeti
Derek Lister
Dougal McCreath

Regrets:

Donald Obonsawin
Daniel Rozon

NWMO Staff in Attendance:

Mahrez Ben Belfadhel Director, Used Fuel Repository Geoscience (Item 5)
Jo-Ann Facella Director, Social Research and Dialogue (Items 5, 6, 7)
Anda Kalvins Director, Environment (Items 5, 6, 7)
Elena Mantagaris Manager, Government and External Relations
Gillian Morris Assistant Board Secretary
Ken Nash President & CEO
Pat Patton Director, Engagement & Aboriginal Relations (Items 5, 6, 7)
Jamie Robinson Director, Communications
Kathryn Shaver Vice President, Corporate Affairs

Guests:

John Wright IPSOS Reid Public Affairs (Item 7)
Will Daley IPSOS Reid Public Affairs (Item 7)

ADVISORY COUNCIL BUSINESS

1. Constitution of Meeting / Approval of Agenda

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. The Agenda was reviewed and approved.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Advisory Council reviewed and approved the minutes of the previous meeting, convened on November 14, 2008.

UPDATES FROM NWMO

3. President's Report

The President reported on key areas of activity for the organization:

Building Relationships

Mr. Nash reported that:

- NWMO has been meeting with both Ontario and Federal government departments to provide briefings on NWMO's work on the design of the siting process and plans for public engagement;
- on March 10 NWMO finalized a Special Project Arrangement with the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC); and
- NWMO's Aboriginal engagement program will include an Elders' Forum which will be convened in Toronto at the end of March.

Research and Development

Mr. Nash reported that new NWMO research papers on adapting to change are complete and will be posted on the NWMO website. Cost estimate updates are underway as is the development of an illustrative safety case.

Financial Surety

Mr. Nash provided an update on the status of the approval of NWMO's funding formula by Natural Resources Canada.

Adapting plans

The President reported that NWMO's updated 5-year Implementation Plan has been issued. NWMO management will begin its internal strategic and business planning process in March and will hold planning discussions with the Board in April.

Governance

NWMO prepared a disposition report on the recommendations from the International Technical Review Group (ITRG) and shared its responses with the ITRG. Internally, NWMO continues to develop a quality assurance system.

Building Organizational Capacity

Mr. Nash reported that a celebratory event to mark the NWMO's transition to an independent organization was held in February for all staff. Staff recruiting continues with a multi-disciplinary advertisement being published in a national newspaper at the end of March.

Siting

Mr. Nash reported that preparations continue for the April/May launch of the draft siting proposal.

OPG Low & Intermediate Level Waste Deep Geological Repository (L&ILW DGR)

Progress continues on a well-defined work program on the L&ILW DGR. Drilling of incline boreholes is underway and the safety assessment work continues. NWMO continues to build its relationship with the Aboriginal community in the Kincardine area.

Update on Nuclear Waste Management in Canada and Internationally

The President discussed developments in the management of low and intermediate level nuclear waste in Canada. He also reviewed progress in other international nuclear waste management programs.

The Council was invited to discuss the President's report. The Council discussed NWMO staff recruiting, the management of low and intermediate level waste in Canada, and developments in other international nuclear waste management programs.

4. Program Updates

Engagement and Social Research Update

Ms. Shaver provided an update on NWMO's recent work in the engagement and social research areas. She noted that considerable staff time and effort has been devoted to developing the draft siting process proposal. Work continues with the Municipal Forum and an upcoming meeting will explore how best to formalize the working relationship. Council member, Eva Ligeti attended the Municipal Forum meeting and reported that the Forum will provide an important contribution to NWMO's work. The Council was briefed on possible areas of research that may be led by the Municipal Forum.

Ms. Shaver invited Pat Patton to update Council on the ongoing work in NWMO's Aboriginal engagement program. Ms. Patton reported that Niigani has been working with NWMO to design the Aboriginal engagement program for the development of the siting process. She reported on other activities also underway. The Council also reviewed NWMO's Draft Aboriginal Policy.

Ms. Shaver updated the Council on the formation of the youth roundtable, noting the diversity of the background and variety of life stages of the participants who range in age from 18-25.

Technical Research and Development Program Update

Mr. Sean Russell reported on the work progress in the technical research and development program. He reported that NWMO continues to work with international partners such as Sweden, Finland and Switzerland. NWMO is also participating in an international project on shaft sealing and monitoring which was launched at the Manitoba Underground Research Laboratory.

Mr. Russell reported on recent work on thermal-mechanical analyses of a deep geological repository in sedimentary rock and noted a report on the work would be published in the near future. He also discussed a report completed on the effects of hydrogen gas on suppressing used fuel dissolution in a deep geological repository.

A draft Special Project Arrangement was signed by the CNSC to provide for a more formal working relationship prior to the submission of a license application for Adaptive Phased Management. The protocol will allow for feedback on NWMO's conceptual design at an early stage.

Mr. Russell also reported that the technical team continued to support the engagement program by attending a variety of meetings and workshops.

Mr. Russell noted that the Independent Technical Review Group (ITRG) found the work of NWMO to be on track with no major gaps or omissions but made a number of recommendations. The ITRG was impressed with the amount of work being accomplished at NWMO with the small number of people on staff, but one of its key recommendations was for NWMO to increase its in-house staffing. NWMO has agreed with the ITRG's recommendations and has proposed an action plan to address them. The ITRG will be periodically reviewing NWMO's progress.

The Council was invited to discuss the program updates. The Council discussed NWMO's plan to review and adapt to developing technologies as the siting process progresses. Mr. Russell reminded the Council that the conclusion from NWMO's recent watching brief on reprocessing is that there is little left to be extracted from a Candu fuel bundle and that reprocessing will most likely not be practical in Canada for 50-100 years. If reprocessing is eventually implemented, a deep geological repository is still required to house the remaining waste.

The Council discussed Mr. Russell's report, focusing on:

- possible long-term scenarios such as societal changes and their effects on Adaptive Phased Management and its implementation timeframes;
- the importance of a public discussion on transportation; and
- changes in the U.S.'s Yucca Mountain program.

The Council had a lengthy discussion regarding incorporating Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge into NWMO's work and how the work of Niigani is incorporated into the public engagement process. A Council member suggested that NWMO's entire process and the way it has conducted its business has been innovative and has outside of the standard western policy-making process as NWMO is looking ahead seven generations.

A Council member referenced the natural analogue, Oklo, a fission reaction in Gabon, Africa, two billion years ago as evidence of a nuclear reaction being a natural occurrence.

Mr. Crombie summarized the discussion and suggested that NWMO needs to continue to reinforce in its communications that NWMO's direction could change as plans are adapted. Council also agreed that an information session on transportation would be useful.

5. Design of the Site Selection Process

Ms. Shaver introduced the review of a working draft of the Site Selection Proposal noting that the public review period is expected to run from May through October 2009. Once finalized, the document will be accompanied by an executive summary and a number of collateral materials. Ms. Shaver welcomed suggestions from Council.

Council engaged in a lengthy discussion on the design of the site selection process. As discussion ensued, Council members sought clarification in some areas, highlighted areas for greater emphasis or elaboration and proposed editorial enhancements for the document. Council discussed opportunities to more fully describe Adaptive Phased Management and the importance of adaptability over time, to respond to a range of future scenarios. Members offered suggestions to set the context more fully for the siting process. Council recommended elaborating on the anticipated community impacts over the phases of project implementation.

6. Engagement Activities for the Design of the Siting Process

Ms. Shaver reviewed the engagement activities planned for 2009 to invite public review and comment on the design of the site selection process. She reported that the public dialogue will be focussed at the regional level in the four nuclear provinces, to continue the collaborative design of the site selection process initiated in 2008.

Ms. Shaver invited staff to outline some major components of the engagement plan:

Public Information Sessions

Mr. Robinson discussed the series of regional public information sessions to be held in a number of major population centres in the four nuclear provinces. He reported that the sessions will be well advertised in advance to encourage participation. Some sessions are scheduled for spring and some for fall, avoiding the summer months when many participants might be vacationing.

The Council discussed the rationale behind the choice of location of the sessions and ways to encourage participation. Council also discussed the facilitation of the sessions and anticipated participation.

Multi-party Dialogues

Ms. Facella reported that the multi-party dialogues will be re-convened to seek input of a diverse cross-section of opinion leaders. Participation will include former participants, those who were unavailable for the fall sessions, as well as additional invitees. NWMO staff will be in attendance at the sessions in order to answer questions where required and to hear the discussions. The dialogues are scheduled for the fall of 2009.

The Council discussed youth involvement in the design of the siting process. It was noted that NWMO's youth roundtable will be considering and providing comment on the design of the process.

Aboriginal Engagement

Ms. Patton discussed NWMO's plans for engaging Aboriginal communities in culturally-appropriate formats in the design of the siting process. She discussed that in designing the regional dialogues across the four nuclear provinces, each province requires a tailored engagement approach. Ms. Patton discussed the various approaches for each of the four nuclear provinces which include working through tribal councils, political organizations and various language groups.

The Council discussed NWMO's approach to Aboriginal engagement and sought clarification on the format of the regional dialogues. Ms. Patton noted that the first session will be held to help people understand the concept of APM, and the second session will be a more in-depth conversation. A Council member noted that NWMO may wish to further articulate that the waste is retrievable and retrievability is designed into the process.

Ms. Patton reported that the locations of the sessions will be determined by Aboriginal groups and their regional organizations. NWMO will continue to respond to requests for presentations from individual groups. A Council member suggested that it is important that NWMO hears from Elders who reside in and do not leave northern areas.

7. IPSOS Canada

Mr. John Wright and Mr. Will Daley from IPSOS joined the meeting to present the results from the national telephone survey conducted for NWMO in the fall of 2008.

The Council discussed the presentation at length covering a number of areas presented by IPSOS.

8. Adapting to Change

The President noted that NWMO's mandate under the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act* requires NWMO to manage all used fuel produced in Canada and, as such, NWMO has an obligation to accommodate fuel from new reactors into its planning. Mr. Nash updated the Council on NWMO's preliminary considerations of the possible impacts of used fuel from new nuclear reactors in future for NWMO's implementation plans.

Mr. Nash reviewed the status of international nuclear waste management projects and their respective plans for accommodating waste from new build reactors.

Mr. Nash reported on a number of new research papers produced by NWMO that discuss fuel volumes and technical and cost implications of managing used fuel from new reactors. These papers will be available on NWMO's website under a new page entitled Adaption – Review, Adjust and Validate Plans. He also discussed how adapting to change is addressed in the draft siting process document.

The Council discussed the impact of the decision on different technologies for new build reactors, the financial feasibility of reprocessing, and the potential impact reprocessing would have on fuel quantities.

9. Next meeting

The Chair invited Council members to confirm their availabilities for upcoming meeting dates.

10. Other business

The Council discussed its draft letter to the Minister commenting on NWMO's 2008 work. Council finalized the letter subject to minor editorial changes.

12. In Camera meeting

Council members agreed that an *in camera* session was not required.

Termination of Meeting

The Chairman declared the meeting terminated at 3:10 pm.

Dated the 27th day of May, 2009

Vice President, APM Engagement and Site Selection