

On page 20 of this first discussion paper it is noted that; “the NWMO has not been asked to take a position on the broader policy issue of the future role of nuclear energy in Canada.” Indeed the stated mandate of the NWMO is just “to submit to the Minister of Natural Resources proposed approaches for the management of used nuclear fuel, along with comments of the Advisory Council, and a recommended approach”

It will be a daunting task to keep the focus on the narrowly defined task of the NWMO in view of such issues of those raised in background document 2-1 – “Ethics Of High Level Nuclear Fuel Waste Disposal In Canada”. Peter Timmerman asks, in the context of boundaries of concern and discussion:

“• How important is the resolution of the waste issue for the future development (if any) of nuclear power?

- Should we be discussing energy policy overall, conservation? Should we be discussing technological innovation in energy, and/or energy strategies in general?

- Should we be examining the full cycle of nuclear energy production? What about waste from other practices?

- Is the discussion of this problem overshadowed by other, more dangerous, priorities, that we should be discussing, or comparing with this one? What are the proper comparisons to be made about other risks, other issues?

- Do our decision-making processes need to change to cope with this, and other long-term issues? What is the legitimacy of our current ways of responding to complex environmental issues?”

One wonders if the NWMO will be able to stick to its mandate in the face of the tantalizing questions raised by Peter Timmerman, and many other issues outside the scope of the NWMO task which are raised in the many background papers.

Peter Timmerman’s questions are worthy. It seems they should be raised in a broader context than nuclear waste management. The first discussion paper notes on page 20 that “where the NWMO feels that assumptions around future energy scenarios are critical to the assessment of alternatives, these will be reported.” One issue in this category relates to future energy supply and climate change. I hope that the NWMO takes into account the possibility that used nuclear fuel will be a needed energy resource for near future generations when alternatives for its management are assessed.

The National Climate Change Process, [Technology Issue Table Final Report](http://www.nccp.ca/html/tables/pdf/options/OR_tech_12-1999.pdf) ([http://www.nccp.ca/html/tables/pdf/options/OR\\_tech\\_12-1999.pdf](http://www.nccp.ca/html/tables/pdf/options/OR_tech_12-1999.pdf)) discusses the need for used nuclear fuel management in the broader context of energy supply and greenhouse gas emissions.