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In 1989 the intention of Canadians regarding the nuclear industry was denied by the federal government. The Federal Environmental Assessment Review Panel chaired by Seaborn reported that, "when it announced the Panel, ministers committed the government to conducting a parallel review in a different forum that would put the nuclear fuel waste question in a broader context. A task force was to look at the environmental effects of nuclear and other methods of generating electricity. Despite repeated reminders from the chairman, the ministers have not held this parallel review."¹

A continued denial of Canadian initiative regarding nuclear waste is apparent when comparing the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act (NFWA) to the self proclaimed mandate of the the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO). "The NFWA is meant to provide a framework for identifying and implementing a future decision regarding the long term management of nuclear fuel waste based on a comprehensive, integrated and economically sound approach in Canada."² And, "The NFWA requires that the NWMO assess at least three approaches for the long term management of nuclear waste: 1) deep geological disposal in the Canadian Shield, 2) storage at nuclear reactor sites, and 3) centralized storage, either above or below ground. THIS DOES NOT PRECLUDE STUDYING OTHER APPROACHES, WHICH MAY BE IDENTIFIED "³

However, interpretation of the NFWA by the all nuclear industry NWMO resulted in a confined framework which excludes a review of Canadian energy policy and skips directly into the selection of a disposal method. In a NWMO document called "Approach to Development of Analytical Framework" it states only that, "The NWMO has committed to: develop collaboratively with Canadians a management approach for the long term care of Canada's used nuclear fuel that is socially acceptable, technically sound, environmentally responsible, and economically feasible "⁴. There is no mention of other approaches which would require an energy policy review.

So, we Canadians ask, why is the government of Canada continuing to deny us an overall energy review? Nuclear waste can cause genetic mutation and cancers for at least a million years. Maybe, the only effective solution to the nuclear waste problem, is to stop producing it. The true cost of nuclear energy is incalculable considering the uncertainty associated with the long time frame and the irreversibility of any accident. Canadians require a feasibility study to compare the real cost of nuclear power to the projected costs of alternate power generating methods so that we can make a comprehensive decision. The restrictive interpretation of its own mandate under the NFWA legislation, undermines the very legitimacy of NWMO. It exposes an all nuclear industry organization with a biased and tactical approach that narrows the framework of nuclear power discussion in Canada. If the successful implementation of NWMO mandate requires the trust of Canadians, the NWMO has already failed. Perhaps they should pay attention to Peter Timmerman. In his paper, Ethics of High Level Nuclear Fuel Waste Disposal In Canada, he asks:

- a) " What are the Boundaries of concern, and of discussion?"
- b) " Should we be discussing energy policy overall?"
- c) " Should we be discussing conservation? "
- d) " Should we be discussing technological innovation in energy?"
- e) " Should we be discussing energy strategies in general?"⁵

Peter Timmerman goes on to say, "The issue of nuclear fuel waste engages fundamental social and ethical concerns, the issue invokes and involves questions about the basic trajectory of modern society. There are those who wish to limit discussion to specific technical choices about where or what to do with the waste, but, the Canadian experience to date suggests that this has been resisted by the wider public. One reason for this is a concern that limiting discussion to specific technical choices is symptomatic of the technical mind set that got us into this situation in the first place."⁶

In a Canadian Policy Research Network (CPRN) report released, July 2004, in Chapter 7 entitled "Implications From the Dialogue For the Way Forward", it was stated that, "Canadians have a strong sense that industry and government are not telling them the whole truth.....they wish to have a voice in major policy choices.....even though they acknowledge and expect that if no communities volunteer, the final choice will be made by the federal government."⁷

That was written after talking to what is described as "non-stakeholders" across Canada, whatever that means. At any rate, we "stakeholders" of Northern Ontario draw a line on the rock of the Canadian Shield. We neither acknowledge nor expect any such unilateral site selection will be made by the federal government. We suggest to Liz at NWMO and the girls at CPRN that the tea party is over. It's time to cross the line and meet some real stake holding Canadians, we will not go quietly into the night.

¹ Sustainable Development and Nuclear Waste, David Runnalls, Oct 2003, pg 7

² The Status of the Legal and Administrative Arrangements for High Level Radioactive Waste Management, Mark Madras & Stacy Ferrara, July 2003, pg 25

³ Key Social Issues Related To Nuclear Waste, or What Canadians Want To Do about Nuclear Waste, Maria Paez Victor, Nov 2003, pg 4

⁴ NWMO, Approach to Development of Analytical Framework, July 2003, pg 1

⁵ Ethics of High Level Nuclear Fuel Waste Disposal In Canada, Peter Timmerman, Sept 2003, pg 1

⁶ Ethics of High Level Nuclear Fuel Waste Disposal In Canada, Peter Timmerman, Sept 2003, pg 14

⁷ Canadian Policy Research Network report written by Judy Watling, Judith Maxwell, Nadini Saxena and Suzanne Taschereau, July 2004, Chapter 7, Implications From the Dialogue For the Way Forward, pg 39

For the reference documents mentioned, visit the federal Nuclear Waste Management Organization at www.nwmo.ca