

Comment Sheet  
Nuclear Waste Management Organization

The Following comments are being submitted as a result of attending two of the three sessions held in Kenora. Like many Canadian Citizens I have concerns regarding this very topic. I am glad that the issues are finally being addressed be it forty years late, however fear any final decision will be made only on political and financial grounds. All too often these Government sponsored information sessions are just that and do not achieve what the public expects of them. We as citizens expect that our input will and should affect the final outcome or decision as the case may be. To often we find that the entire process was only to "float a balloon" to judge public opinion so government can implement a plan previously decided on. That being said, I was not surprised by the low turnout at the sessions. People are skeptical about taking time to enter into this sort of process as they have been ignored many times in the past.

I have read the provided material regarding the three options being considered for managing nuclear waste. It is obvious that we are being led to conclude that deep geological storage is the best option. The reasons may be many but are based on what is relevant today, "Cost and Security" with little concern about what the future might bring. We must not be short sighted if this is the option taken. It appears that the plan would be to place it deep underground "within a secure repository" sealed and buried, clean up the entry sites and hope that it would be forgotten after about three hundred years. This option must leave the option for future access to the material. Science is ever evolving and it is quite conceivable that in the future either short or long term science will be able to deal with the material in such a way as to permanently dispose of it or safely reuse it.

The Canadian Shield and Deep Geological Storage.

Although it has not been finalized as the choice for final burial of the material, it may be a leading contender. I would like to point out that the Canadian Shield covers most of northern Canada including most of Ontario and for the most part is a stable environment.

If this is where it is to be buried I feel strongly that it should be buried in eastern Ontario for the following reasons.

1. A central storage site could be located close to most of the nuclear generating sites and therefore most of the waste material will only have to be transported short distances.
2. The people and knowledge required to deal with the waste are close at hand and will be readily available to monitor the waste as well as deal with any emergencies.
3. For security reasons, Ontario has several military bases close at hand and they should be in charge of protecting the site.

4. Internationally we accept that each country shall deal with its own waste this way only those that choose to use it become responsible for the waste. If we take this one step further, as Northern Ontario does not use or benefit from the use of nuclear energy, it should not be required to deal with the waste.
5. By keeping the nuclear waste in the area of Ontario where it is produced and the benefits are received, there will be more of an incentive to seek out alternative sources of energy.
6. The reasons for managing nuclear waste is due to the obvious dangers it represents to the environment as well as having it fall into the wrong hands. By transporting large quantities of it over large distances and into areas outside Southern Ontario we would only be endangering much more of the environment and for the most part people who have never had to deal with it. These people and this new environment would therefore be sentenced to deal with all the negative aspects of the waste forever. This after never receiving any of the benefits.
7. The Northwestern portion of the Province gets all of its electricity from sources other than nuclear power plants and shall continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Any replacement from coal fired generating stations will be obtained from the Province of Manitoba. We should therefore not have to deal with any unforeseen problems associated with the permanent storage of the waste. As was pointed out with the informational material provided, the science of deep geological storage is not proven due to the thousands of years the waste will have to be stored.
8. The informational material points out the dangers of storing this material at the sites of the nuclear plants due to the proximity to the adjacent lakes. This is a valid argument however would be true regardless of where in Ontario it is finally stored. Most of Ontario and in the north particularly the surface is covered with lakes, rivers streams and swamps. I have not yet heard of any mines into which water does not flow freely from fishers in the rock regardless of how deep the mine. I would doubt very much if it is possible to drill a shaft into the granite deep enough and still open up the required storage area without passing through many such fishers.

#### Storage Problems

The informational material points out that if the waste is stored at the reactor sites or at central sites either above ground or shallow below ground that the storage containers would require replacing every so many years. This also was brought up during the discussions and was apparently required due to degradation of the containers over time from the elements. The same will be true with deep geological storage as a result of water seeping in through fishers in the rock. The degradation would be harder to detect, far more difficult and exceedingly expensive to repair. This problem was not addressed in



the informational material but must be considered. This possibility should be added to any future informational material for discussion.

#### Security & Monitoring

Security and monitoring must continue at any storage site until such time as the waste can be neutralized. This can only be accomplished by the passing of the proper legislation. This entire process is to manage the waste so it does not endanger present and future generations. We must therefore remain vigilant in protecting future generations. The option of "bury and forget" can never be a viable option.

#### Alternative Sources of Power

During the sessions held in Kenora a suggestion was put forward that we should use more Natural Gas to produce electricity. This would not be acceptable in that the result would be that we would only use up one source of energy to replace another and this would in turn just drive up the price of both sources.

The federal and provincial governments should spend more money on research and development of alternative sources of energy. This done, having used tax money for the purpose, they then should regulate and control the prices being charged for it. They could insure that any companies dealing in electrical power in Canada are wholly Canadian owned. Governments could then pass legislation requiring the industry to open all their books to government inspection and therefore control prices.

#### Community Participation

During the Kenora sessions, Finland was brought up as an example where four communities volunteered to have the waste disposed of near them. I dare say that any community that does volunteer does so out of economic need and not a true wish to have nuclear waste near them. The government would be making a big mistake if it allows any area to accept the waste for economic gain. This would be similar to watching someone sinking in quicksand then, holding a cobra by the tail, sliding the head toward the sinking subject in order for them to save themselves. The government would be copping out from making the proper decision and in the end quite likely only delaying the destruction of the community.

#### Implementation

There is no doubt that steps must be taken to manage "store" nuclear waste but whatever option is decided, great care must be taken to involve as little of the environment as possible. It must also be done in a fair manner. I agree that as many people as possible be consulted including as many scientists and lay people as possible. In the end however I feel strongly that those people not presently dealing with it and who receive no benefit from it, should be burdened with any unforeseen problems associate with its storage. The timetable for implementation has only one real flaw and that is the

rush to make a final decision by next November. More time should be set aside in order to consult with a larger portion of the population. It is quite apparent that the larger portion of the population is not even aware that this process is taking place.

Governments must also take a very active part in developing alternate sources of energy at the same time that this process is taking place with the aim of as soon as possible getting away from nuclear energy so this problem will not persist. The Federal Government must take an active part in developing alternate sources of energy rather than waiting for the private sector. The private sector will only spend the money necessary if it is guaranteed large profits later.

#### Possible Alternative

If the government were to spend as much money on the science learning how to neutralize the waste as it is on long term storage we may be further ahead.

#### Contact Information

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