

Minister Statement on NWMO 2007 Annual Report

Natural Resources Canada
June 24, 2008

On March 27, 2008, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) submitted its annual report for 2007, entitled *Moving Forward Together*, as required by the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act*.

The 2007 annual report comes nine months after the Government of Canada accepted the NWMO's recommendation to adopt the Adaptive Phased Management (APM) approach to managing Canada's used nuclear fuel. (APM) is a safe, long-term approach that will ensure the used fuel is monitored and can be retrieved if desired. This approach is also designed to allow Canada to take advantage of emerging energy technologies, including the possibility that the used fuel could be recycled in the future.

The decision to accept this safe approach to managing used nuclear fuel reflects our government's commitment to protecting the health of Canadians and our environment. The NWMO is now moving forward with the implementation of the (APM) approach, a process that will take place over many decades. The first step will be to find a suitable site, within a willing host community, to construct a long-term nuclear fuel waste management facility. In the Annual Report, the NWMO notes that it is now working toward the design of a collaborative and open process for selecting a site. It is essential that Canadians have every opportunity to play a meaningful part in this process. The Annual Report details the actions NWMO is taking to ensure Canadians have a say in how they are consulted in the development of the site selection process. A variety of methods will be used with the aim of hearing from people holding diverse perspectives.

To support the process of implementing the (APM) approach, the NWMO continued during 2007 to expand its in-house expertise in the areas of technical and social research, public engagement, legal, finance and human resources. To further expand its capacity in social and technical research, the NWMO has established partnerships with universities and with its counterpart organizations in other countries.

In order to bring a broader diversity of expertise and experience to management and planning, the NWMO has expanded the membership of its Board of Directors to include members with strong backgrounds in ethics, finance and Aboriginal culture. Similarly, new members with experience in geoscience, strategic communications and Aboriginal traditional knowledge have joined the NWMO Advisory Council.

Under the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act*, once Canada has determined a long-term approach to managing used fuel, the NWMO is required to propose a funding formula for implementing the approach. Each of the nuclear energy corporations and Atomic Energy of Canada Limited have set aside funds in trust in order to address the future costs of implementing the (APM) approach.

The NWMO was required to submit a funding formula for fiscal year 2008, listing the amount of each deposit for fiscal year 2008. The NWMO has submitted this information in its 2007 Annual Report, subject to approval by the Government of Canada, and a review of the formula is underway.

Since the passage of the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act* in 2002, the NWMO member companies (Ontario Power Generation, New Brunswick Power, Hydro-Québec) and Atomic Energy of Canada Limited have been contributing to individual trust funds that will be used to support implementation of the (APM) approach. The current value of these contributions, including income earned from investment, is \$1.4 billion.

The Government of Canada will continue to monitor the activities of the NWMO with the utmost care, to ensure the organization maintains the capacity to carry out its mandate under the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act*. Canadians are assured that the long-term management of used nuclear fuel will be conducted in a way that is both safe and in the best interests of Canadians.

— The Honourable Gary Lunn, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Natural Resources Canada