

Nuclear Waste Management

Native Women's Association of Canada
Consultation

Ottawa June 14, 2005

Native Management Services

NWMO Consultations

- *What are other Aboriginal groups saying?*
 1. *Respect: It is important that we walk together in dignity and respect and finish what we started*
 2. *Responsibility: We have responsibility for the future generations*
 - *We should take a proactive role in energy conservation*
 - *We must control, mitigate and minimize the long term effects that we are aware of*

What other Aboriginal groups are saying:

3. Mistrust, Fear and Trust:

- Industry dominance on the NWMO Board is a conflict of interest*
- Economically depressed First nations may be targeted for disposal/ storage*
- Mistrust of governments, its' institutions, its' promises, its' treaties*
- The North has experience with abandoned mines, persistent organic pollutants etc and no one is responding*

What are other Aboriginal groups saying?

4. Traditional knowledge and wisdom must be incorporated including: Process related insight (who talks, when and how), knowledge related to the land, values that respect the environment, Spirituality.

- Respect for elders' wisdom*
- Consideration of prophecies*
- Health of mother earth and the global environment*

Other Groups Cont'd

- 5. Primary concern for the safety and security of the environment*
- 6. Need for action NOW*
- 7. Consultation must be a 2 way street*
- 8. Recognition and respect for Aboriginal Treaties and Rights*
- 9. Aboriginal representation in NWMO*
- 10. Transportation of waste is a concern*

Other groups cont'd

- 11. Definitions of community and voluntarism*
- 12. Waste importation from other countries where CANDU reactors are sold*
- 13. What is meant by “remote”?*
- 14. Continuing engagement*
- 15. Involvement of youth in decision-making*

The NWAC Response

- The NWMO Recommendation:

*“Our recommendation for the long-term management of used nuclear fuel waste in Canada has as its primary objectives – **safety** – the protection of humans and the environment – and **fairness** to this and future generations.*

*Therefore we recommend to the Gov’t of Canada **Adaptive Phased Management**, a risk management approach with the following characteristics*

Characteristics of the Approach

- Centralized containment and isolation of the used fuel in a deep geological repository in suitable rock formations, such as the crystalline rock of the Canadian Shield or Ordovician sedimentary rock;

1. Where are these areas? Canadian Shield is across Central and Northern regions of Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan. Ordovician sedimentary rock is primarily located in Southern and Northern Ontario

Questions

- *What population will most likely be affected by the approach? How?*
- *Are there benefits to Aboriginal communities through the implementation?*
- *Are there risks to Aboriginal communities through the implementation?*
- *Do the benefits outweigh the risks?*
- *Are there ways to balance benefits and risks? How?*

Characteristics

Flexibility in the pace and manner of implementation through a phased decision-making process, supported by a program of continuous learning, research and development.

Questions:

- 1. How do we ensure our involvement in the decision-making process? Ie “pace and manner”*
- 2. Is traditional knowledge given the same weight as scientific research in the “continuous learning phase”? How will this be ensured?*

Characteristics

- Provision for an interim step in the implementation process in the form of shallow underground storage of used fuel at a central site, prior to final placement in a deep repository.

Questions:

- 1. How is the site selected? What about transportation to the site?*
- 2. What assurances are there that once the waste is at the interim site it will be buried as originally planned?*

Questions

- 3. Do we make decisions now about disposal or do we make provisions for future generations to make the decisions?*
- 4. Do we keep using Nuclear Energy when we know that the waste is extremely hazardous for 10,000 years plus?*

Characteristics

Continuous monitoring of the used fuel to support data collection and confirmation of the safety and performance of the repository;

Questions:

- 1. How can the continuous involvement of Aboriginal people and the keepers of traditional knowledge be assured throughout this process? Will we be taken seriously? How do we know?*

Characteristics

Potential for retrievability of the used fuel for an extended period, until such time as a future society makes a determination on the final closure, and the appropriate form and duration of postclosure monitoring.

Questions:

- 1. Does this assume that Canada will discontinue the use of Nuclear Energy sometime within the foreseeable future?*

NWMO will:

- Meet or exceed all regulatory standards and requirements for protecting the health, safety and security of humans and the environment;
- Provide financial surety through funding by the nuclear power corporations'
- Seek a willing community to host the central facilities...Implementation of the approach will respect the social, cultural and economic aspirations of the affected communities;

NWMO will:

- Focus site selection for the facilities on those provinces that are directly involved in the nuclear fuel cycle;
- Sustain the engagement of people and communities throughout the phased process of decision and implementation; and
- Be responsive to advances in technology, natural and social science research, Traditional Aboriginal Knowledge, and societal values and expectations.

NWAC Response:

- *What framework can NWAC design to ensure that we are involved at critical decision-making points?*
- *What principles do we as Native Women propose to guide any further discussion on Nuclear Waste Management?*
- *Other issues.*