

NWMO's Dispositioning of the NWMO Advisory Council's 2021 Advice

(March 2022)

Advice	Action Taken
Communications / Government Relations	
<i>At the March 22, 2021 meeting:</i> The Council discussed whether NWMO had a national digital communication strategy suggesting that it may positively impact the process.	The NWMO continues to expand the digital communications strategy – not just geographically – but by audience types as well. Expansion decisions are made based on analytics, best practice and continued advancement of our approach to increase visibility of our work. We continue to review the overall approach on a regular basis.
<i>At the June 14, 2021 meeting:</i> The Council provided suggestions on expanding the breadth of NWMO's communications strategy and how NWMO could be taking on a more extensive thought leadership position in certain areas of its work like Reconciliation and willingness.	NWMO will look for opportunities to highlight and more broadly communicate its thinking on these topics with the purpose of contributing to societal discussion more generally, and further building confidence in the NWMO and its public interest focus.
<i>At the June 14, 2021 meeting:</i> It was suggested there might be benefit in having an open dialogue with communities about incorporating their existing definitions of sustainable development into the sustainability white paper.	NWMO recognized the importance of grounding thinking on sustainability with the approaches and understanding used by the Indigenous and municipal communities that are our potential partners. Aspects of the siting process were designed to help facilitate this and some understanding has been built to date through these activities. Activities have included NWMO support to communities to: develop a community profile organized within a sustainability framework; develop a sustainability vision and plan to achieve that vision; and build on this to develop a project vision aligned with their sustainability vision.

Advice	Action Taken
<i>At the September 20, 2021 meeting:</i> Council members had a number of suggestions related to the visibility update: • A Council member suggested that consideration be given to increasing the pace of NWMO's expanded outreach. • A Council member suggested that NWMO could incorporate into its strategy considerations around environmental racism, justice and the coming together of climate change and diversity, equity and inclusion. • Youth were also recommended as an important group to include. • A Council member suggested net zero targets should be explored.	The NWMO is actively increasing the pace of expanded outreach. Management will look for additional opportunities to incorporate the topics identified into strategy considerations and communications.
<i>At the September 20, 2021 meeting:</i> • Council members emphasized the importance of Provincial government engagement and including environment and climate change organizations in its outreach.	Management agrees with this advice. Provincial government outreach is a critical part of the government relations outreach strategy, and environment and climate change organizations are included in stakeholder outreach plans.
<i>At the December 7, 2021 meeting:</i> • When discussing the implementation of the Reconciliation Policy, a Council member cautioned using the term "historic" when referring to treaties as they have relevance today and discussed treaties which cover some of the Great Lakes.	Management will take this into consideration in documentation relating to treaties.
Regulatory	
<i>At the March 22, 2021 meeting:</i> • A Council member suggested keeping a watching brief on other projects that are making their way through the regulatory process.	Director, Regulatory Affairs and Environmental Assessment has taken on responsibility for keeping this watching brief.
<i>At the June 14, 2021 meeting:</i> • With respect to the regulatory process, the Council suggested a community-led study could aid in creating research questions.	NWMO has been documenting community questions throughout the siting process and has been adjusting its internal work plans to address them. A list of research questions and broad range of studies has been collaboratively developed with communities in each of the two siting areas. This has led to a shared community-NWMO research program and implementation of mechanisms for ongoing community involvement in the management and oversight of studies.

Advice	Action Taken
Safety	
<i>At the September 20, 2021 meeting:</i> • The Council supported NWMO's work in developing confidence statements in the technical program. • A Council member suggested that there not only needs to be confidence in safety technically but also socially. • A Council member suggested NWMO work closely with communicators experienced in clearly communicating complex technical subjects to assist in building confidence in safety. • A Council member also suggested NWMO ensures the public is aware of the safety parameters related to the above ground facilities.	Management understands the importance of the confidence statements addressing safety issues in the manner that communities themselves have expressed them, including questions and concerns relating to safety of the surface facilities that are part of the project.
<i>At the December 7, 2021 meeting:</i> • A Council member suggested that not only should the discussion be around protection of water but be expanded into improvement of water quality. Another Council member suggested the importance of conveying the effectiveness of the robust multi-barrier system in protecting water.	Management will take these comments under consideration as the water communications strategy is further developed and implemented.
Site Selection	
<u>At the December 7, 2021 Meeting</u> • Council members discussed the need to ensure some of the highly technical information included in the Geoscientific Review Group's report is put into context.	The Geoscientific Review Group (GRG) acts as an independent external peer review group and these reports are finalized without the NWMO's review to ensure and maintain independence. The technical team provided The Council's feedback to the GRG in December 2021.

IN CAMERA DISCUSSIONS

Due to the sensitive nature and timing of some of the advice requested by NWMO, it was determined appropriate for the discussions to be in camera for Council members to have the freedom to deeply explore the topics and provide advice to the NWMO.

Below outlines the nature of those discussions held by Council during 2020. NWMO has listened to the advice and discussed with Council its responses to the Council's advice.

SITING & PARTNERSHIPS

At the March 22, 2021 and June 14, 2021 Advisory Council Meetings:

- The Council discussed the importance of listening to potential partner communities regarding timing on site selection, and that those decisions should help to maintain relationships with communities based on trust and mutual respect.
- Plans should continue to be discussed in a clear and transparent manner with communities.
- The Council suggested that the hosting agreements needed to reflect the responsibilities of the host communities as well as the NWMO, and that clear roles, responsibilities and authorities are important considerations.
- The Council suggested there might be mutual issues between the communities that need to be considered when negotiating hosting agreements separately.
- The Council continues to highlight the importance of a national communication strategy that describes the sound, transparent, and defensible nature of the site selection process.

At the March 22, 2021 Advisory Council Meeting:

- The Council discussed the importance of working collaboratively to establish a safety case that address public questions and concerns satisfactorily.

At the September 20, 2021 Advisory Council meeting:

- The Council suggested NWMO consider engaging community leaders to communicate the importance of constructive dialogue and promoting civil discourse.

At the September 20, 2021 Advisory Council meeting:

- The Council suggested it may be helpful to see if municipalities could incorporate ceremony, in their own way, to assist their decision-making process.

At the December 7, 2021 Advisory Council meeting:

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- The Council highlighted the importance of considering the how to apply the Great Earth Law in assessments and seeking involvement from Grand Council Treaty #3.

TECHNICAL

At the March 22, 2021 Advisory Council Meeting:

- The Council identified the on-site process of preparing the fuel bundles for underground storage/deposit being an important topic to advance during engagement and communications with communities and the general public.

REGULATORY PROCESS

At the March 22, 2021 and December 7, 2021 Advisory Council Meetings:

- Considering the unfamiliarity with the new impact assessment process, the Council suggested there would be merit in developing a regulatory approvals strategy.