



**FIRST INTERIM REPORT TO  
NUCLEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION**  
Dialogue Sessions on NWMO's Recommendation for the  
Long-term Management of Nuclear Fuel Waste

December 14, 2004

## **1.0 PARTICIPANTS**

Dwight Dorey	National Chief
Patrick Brazeau	Vice Chief
Lorraine Foreman	Director of Operations
Mike McGuire	Ontario Metis Aboriginal Association
Guillaume Carle	Native Alliance of Quebec
Todd Russell	Labrador Metis Nation
Betty Ann Lavallée	New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council
Jamie Gallant	Native Council of Prince Edward Island
Grace Conrad	Native Council of Nova Scotia
Brendan Sheppard	Federation of Newfoundland Indians
David Turner	CAP Western Office
Larry Wucherer	Aboriginal Council of Manitoba
Pat Patton	Nuclear Waste Management Organization
Dave Martin	Greenpeace
Dr. Gordon Edwards	Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility
Alastair MacPhee	Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

## **2.0 RESULTS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

Vice Chief Patrick Brazeau introduced the CAP steering committee to Pat Patton of the NWMO. He addressed both NWMO and the steering committee making the following points:

- CAP is at the beginning of a dialogue process with NWMO;
- Canada is currently storing 20 million kilos of nuclear waste;
- There is no long-term policy on what to do with nuclear waste;
- The issue is highly complex, technical and managerial;
- Nuclear waste will most likely be buried near or on an Aboriginal traditional territory;
- The federal government has acknowledged the requirement to consult with Aboriginal peoples on any decision that may affect our rights and interests;
- The federal government has the oversight required to ensure that nuclear fuel waste will be taken care of in a comprehensive, cost-effective and integrated manner;
- Nuclear waste is the most radioactive material on earth;
- The choices we make will determine the health of the environment for centuries to come;

- There are 22 CANDU reactors operating in Canada;
- There are more than one million highly radioactive bundles of waste uranium fuel in temporary storage;
- This issue has divided Aboriginal people in the United States because some tribes support burying nuclear waste on their land while others are opposed; and
- Some see the attempt to bury nuclear waste on Indian land as environmental racism.

Pat Patton showed the participants a video presenting the issue from the perspective of NWMO. Some of the general points expressed were:

- Nuclear energy accounts for 35% of Ontario's energy consumption;
- 30% of energy consumption in New Brunswick comes from nuclear power;
- 2.5% of energy consumption in Quebec is supplied by nuclear power;
- The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission licenses and regulates the nuclear plants including the storage of used nuclear waste;
- There are 1.8 million used bundles in interim storage;
- 3.6 million will be produced over the lifespan of the existing nuclear plants;
- Some nuclear waste is stored at AECL facilities in Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec as well as smaller amounts at some nuclear research reactors at universities;
- Canada has not adopted a long term plan for dealing with its nuclear fuel waste;
- NWMO has been conducting a series of "conversations" with citizens and experts to find out what Canadians expect in a long term used nuclear fuel strategy;
- 10 key questions were part of the first NWMO discussion document *Asking the Right Questions*;
- Experts alone cannot tell us what risks are acceptable to us;
- What is the responsibility of our generation?
- What institutions will inspire confidence and trust in dealing with the issue?
- No one has the monopoly on the correct answers;
- Safety and security are the overriding concerns for any plan;
- Guiding values have been drawn up based on mainstream discussions;
- The federal government will make the ultimate decision;
- An ethics roundtable created six principles to guide the assessment process;
- An assessment team was assembled by NWMO to make a preliminary comparison of long term nuclear waste management approaches;
- An option will have good and bad points and there is no perfect solution;
- Costs for a deep geological disposal site are estimated to be \$16.2 Billion dollars;

- Under the deep geological disposal option, there would be no intention of digging it up again for any reason;
- The centralized option would have all used nuclear fuel stored at one site either above or below ground. Costs are estimated to be between \$15.5 and \$20 billion dollars for the first 300 years;
- With the onsite storage option, the costs never end for our descendants; and
- Common ground in public opinion has been found: there is no one perfect answer; a decision should be made now; any approach needs to be flexible; the implementation process is as important as the method itself; strong governance is required; there is a need for more opportunity for citizen involvement in decision making; people are optimistic about the future; and society's expectations could shift over time.

Pat Patton made the following general points:

- 14 options for nuclear waste management have been looked at by NWMO;
- the "shooting into space" option has not been studied, and it is too early to think of it as a solution: it is a concept for future;
- 11 months are left in the NWMO dialogue process;
- There are 20 nuclear reactors in Canada; 5 reactors are in extended shutdown;
- One reactor at Pickering has been refurbished and a second reactor is currently being refurbished;
- AECL is storing used nuclear fuel waste at Whiteshell Laboratories (Manitoba), Chalk River (Ontario), and Gentilly (Quebec);
- There are some research reactors at universities throughout Canada;
- Canada is one of the largest producers of medical isotopes;
- There are 1.8 million fuel bundles temporarily stored: the quantity will double in the next 30 years;
- There will be 3.6 million bundles at the end of the life of the current reactors;
- 95% of the used nuclear fuel is produced and stored in Ontario;
- Used nuclear fuel stays at the reactor site for 7 to 10 years while it cools off in wet fuel bays. It is then removed and put in dry storage containers;
- There are 438 nuclear reactors throughout the world in 38 countries;
- These reactors produce 16% of the world's electricity;
- There are 30 reactors under construction around the world;
- China wants to build 33 more reactors over the next 30 years;
- Reprocessing of used nuclear fuel leaves behind even more toxic waste;
- Retrievability should not be confused with the idea of recycling: reprocessing does not result in less nuclear fuel waste;

- There is international cooperation among countries who are working on the storage of used nuclear fuel waste;
- Sweden and Finland have adopted deep underground storage;
- US Yucca mountain is stalled in legal complications;
- The NWMO Advisory Council was described. Appointments were recommended by federal and provincial governments and the appointments were made by NWMO;
- A workshop on Aboriginal traditional knowledge was held in 2003;
- Implementation of the decision will take 30 years;
- NWMO has not been selecting Aboriginal groups to dialogue with but responding to groups who have approached them;
- NWMO feels that they are at the beginning of building the relationship with Aboriginal peoples; and
- NWMO wants to involve Aboriginal people everywhere they can and in any way they can.

*Note: a more detailed meeting report will be compiled and distributed throughout the CAPs affiliate organizations.*

### **3.0 PROPOSED PROGRAMS**

#### *Nationally*

- Establishment of a steering committee;
- On-going liaison with NWMO;
- On-going briefing of affiliate leadership and CAP Executive;
- Distribution of two volumes of background information to affiliates;
- Distribution of NWMO video;
- Compilation of key observations on NWMO's publication *Understanding the Choices*;
- Website information on the issue;
- Questionnaire compilation and distribution to CAP affiliate organizations;
- Interactive Questionnaire on the CAP website; and
- News releases to Aboriginal community newspapers.

#### *Regionally*

- Regional coordinators designated in each CAP affiliate;
- Ongoing briefing of affiliate leadership;
- Review of materials distributed by CAP;
- Liaison with CAP coordination; and

- Regional dialogue meetings.

#### **4.0 INITIATION OF REGIONAL DIALOGUES**

- Agreements have been prepared and signed by CAP and its affiliate organizations;
- Information has been distributed to CAPs affiliate organizations;
- Affiliate organization leadership has been briefed on the issue;
- Affiliate representatives have met with NWMO; and
- CAP executive has been briefed on the issue.

#### **5.0 COMMENTS ON MANAGEMENT APPROACHES**

The CAP questionnaire on the NWMO dialogue process will use the following basic structure including the addition of potential choices for answers. We expect that this format will increase the number of respondents.

##### *Storage at Reactor Sites*

Strengths  
Limitations  
Other Comments

##### *Deep Geological Disposal*

Strengths  
Limitations  
Other Comments

##### *Centralized Storage*

Strengths  
Limitations  
Other Comments