Nuclear Waste Management

Native Women’s Association of Canada
Consultation
Ottawa June 14, 2005
Native Management Services
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 prophesies
- 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 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? I.e. “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?
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.