

**Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nation Chiefs Nuclear Waste  
Management Dialogue**

**Interim Report**

**Submitted on January 28, 2005**

**Submitted to NWMO**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Steering Committee had decided to conduct two day long workshops within the region where key people representing different organizations and age groups would be invited to give their input and ideas into this process. It was hoped that these meetings would begin the discussion on Nuclear Waste and spark interest to learn more about the issue.

**FREDERICTON WORKSHOP**

The first day-long Nuclear Waste Management workshop organized by the Atlantic Policy Congress was held in Fredericton New Brunswick, at the Lord Beaverbrook hotel on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005. We had 7 participants show up all together we had 11 people including speakers. The weather prevented other participants from showing up, as it was storming that day. The meeting started at 10 a.m. with an opening prayer made by a much respected elder from Tobique First Nation. Opening comments were made by Cheryl Knockwood and myself. The main observation at this workshop was that many people are unaware of nuclear energy and nuclear waste. For that reason it was great that Mike Krizanc from NWMO was there to give an overview of this subject matter. Nancy Bobbish from the Assembly of First Nations was also present to share the national First Nation perspective. There was a lively discussion and many questions were asked.

## **QUESTIONS**

The following are some of the questions asked in this session:

- Is NWMO an agency of the government?
- Was NWMO established by the government?
- Is the NWMO in a conflict of interest because they represent the Nuclear companies and is in a position of advising the government?
- Where would money for an independent advisory board come from?
- What happens to the water that is used in the cool bundles?
- How do the ports get emptied, from dry storage?
- Do they monitor the water, after it is done with the bundles, enclosed system, so the filters are contaminated?
- What happened with vent ports?
- What does AECL mean and what is this agencies responsibility?
- Do you have an Ethics panel? When do they meet? I hear they didn't have the meeting?
- Are there First Nations on the ethical technical expertise committee?
- Do you have anyone in the various committees/ groups in NWMO have first nation's background?
- Are there opportunities for Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) to be given input in the Science Committee?
- What is the number of trucks transporting, off road option, from all the plants?
- If can't monitor in the Back filling option, cause the cameras will not be able, is it really an option?
- How would natural disasters impact the storage in the three options?

- Would NWMO entertain extending its deadlines to ensure proper in depth first nations input into this national dialogue?
- How is nuclear energy viable?
- What are the States doing that we can learn from their experiences?
- Has there been any talk about getting the government to pick out first nations people for the advisory committee?
- Can it be proven scientifically that for the deep geological options that earthquakes will not bother it?
- What happens if there is an accident? And who will be responsible- NWMO?
- How many of these containers did it take for these to grow, and how many more of these will be produced?
- Are there other methods Canada can utilize to produce power?
- How much land would be needed to store the containers, what will happen to the land after that?
- We need to find other means because we will have to refurbish again and again.

The following were the recommendations:

- NWMO needs to bring in first nations values, understandings, learning's and knowing on what's important within this process.
- First nations must be involved throughout this process.
- NWMO's definition of community must include First Nations whose traditional territory the nuclear generating stations are located within.
- TEK should be part of this assessment framework; we need a First Nations people involve in the process, scientifically or ethically. Recommendation that TEK knowledge position paper be brought.
- Elders all across Canada, have ecological knowledge that could make help with the decisions.
- Aboriginal eye view, because we never see that recommendations.
- Stop digging it up, plan and simple and it don't cost money.
- That the decision making process should also include the principle of sustainable development, be environmentally sound and should respect Aboriginal and treaty rights guaranteed under s.35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.
- To provide a greater accountability and transparency, it was recommended that a public agency, as an agent of the crown, be created to study the management options and make recommendations to the Governor in council.

- Recommended that the Advisory Council's membership reflect aboriginal traditional knowledge.
- Recommend a subsection stating the federal government will provide resources to Aboriginal governments and organizations to facilitate their informed participation on the Advisory Council, including support for research and discussion.
- Recommended that traditional territories be included, to recognize that economic regions may or may not coincide with the traditional territories of First Nations.
- Due to concern over a narrow interpretation of "significant socio-economic effects" it was recommended that there should be a definition of "significant socio-economic effects" in section 2 of the Bill.

## **CONCLUSION**

The sharing of the feedback from this session is not to be construed as consultation under s 35(1). The main theme in this session is the need for First Nations to have more time and dollars to continue with this dialogue in the next fiscal year.