The NWMO Board of Directors has been expanded to include members who are not associated with the nuclear industry. Deborah Poff and Ron Jamieson accepted appointments effective March 1, 2007.

“The member corporations have taken very seriously public expressions of concern about the limitations of a Board composed entirely of representatives of nuclear waste owners,” said NWMO Board Chairman, Dr. Gary Kugler. “These appointments bring a greater range of experience, skill and perspective to the Board as we provide oversight and strategic direction to the NWMO in preparation for its implementation mandate.”

Ms. Poff is a Professor of Philosophy and Political Science at the University of Northern British Columbia. She is also the founder and editor of the Journal of Business Ethics, Teaching Business Ethics and the Journal of Academic Ethics. She has published numerous articles in the area of applied ethics and is the current editor of Business Ethics in Canada.

Prior to his retirement in late 2005, Mr. Jamieson served as Senior Vice-President, Aboriginal Banking, with BMO Bank of Montreal. He has been active in economic development initiatives for Aboriginal communities across Canada. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Ontario Power Authority and served as Chairman, President and CEO of the Ontario Energy Corporation.

Both appointments were made by Ontario Power Generation, which is entitled through the NWMO Membership Agreement to assign up to seven directors to the board. After considering skills and competencies needed for the Board as the organization prepares to implement a management approach, OPG decided to focus its search on bringing both Aboriginal perspectives and ethical or social sciences expertise to the Board. Consideration was also given to addressing the gender imbalance of the Board.

An independent external search firm was engaged to identify candidates. Ms. Poff
and Mr. Jamieson were selected from among potential candidates presented by the firm and short-listed for interviews. NWMO Chairman, Gary Kugler, recommended the two candidates to OPG based on their experience, interest, and suitability to the search criteria. Appointment letters were issued by OPG President James Hankinson, and took effect on March 1, 2007.

The Board also recently welcomed two other new members.

Josée Pilon, a Special Projects Manager with Hydro-Québec, succeeds Michel Rhéaume who resigned effective December 31, 2006. An MBA graduate of Laval University, Ms. Pilon is member of the steering committee on the evaluation project for the rehabilitation of Gentilly-2.

And, C. Ian Ross was appointed to succeed Fred Long who was a founding director of the organization. Retired from a career at the University of Western Ontario and as a senior executive in the private sector, Mr. Ross is a director of several corporations, including Ontario Power Generation.

Josée Pilon  C. Ian Ross

The NWMO Board of Directors now totals seven members. In addition to the four new members and Dr. Kugler, Ken Nash and Laurie Comeau have retained their memberships. Biographical notes on each of the members can be reviewed at: www.nwmo.ca/board.

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The NWMO is in a period of transition as the Government of Canada reviews the Final Study and formulates its response. Ongoing activities during the transition are reported on our website. Visit often.
The NWMO work program for 2007 is organized in several key areas. Our priorities include:

- designing a well-resourced and integrated organization, committed to a common vision of implementation with strategic oversight by a strong Board of Directors and guidance by an active Advisory Council;
- continuing to engage and build relationships with a range of stakeholders and potentially affected communities of interest;
- expanding the base of technical research and development required to support the further design and guide implementation of the selected management approach;
- expanding the base of social research to understand the various communities of interest, how best to engage them, and the range of social and ethical issues to be addressed; and
- initiating, following a Government decision, the collaborative design of a siting process and a citizen engagement program to support it.

In addition to strengthening NWMO and Aboriginal peoples’ preparedness for future engagement in the implementation of a long term nuclear waste management approach, Niigâni seeks to: develop cross-cultural thinking between the NWMO and Aboriginal communities; enhance NWMO understanding of the goals and aspirations of Aboriginal peoples; provide advice on interweaving Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge into NWMO thinking and processes; and advise the NWMO on how to communicate and engage with Aboriginal people at national, regional and community levels.

One of the first projects undertaken by Niigâni has been to advise the NWMO on creation of a summer work program in which youths will visit Aboriginal communities to learn first hand from Elders, community members, and young people how Aboriginal communities can best be engaged in NWMO work. The program will develop and pilot a model and report on how it might be effectively implemented.

Niigâni is non-political; its members speak as individuals. It will continue to function for as long as its advice benefits the work of the NWMO and of the members.

TRUST FUNDS

Canada’s nuclear operators have made their 2006 contributions to trust funds earmarked for long-term used fuel management. Deposits, which now total $990 million, are made annually by Ontario Power Generation, Hydro Quebec, NB Power and Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. Money in the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act (NFWA) trusts can only be used by the NWMO after a construction or operating licence has been issued to implement the long-term waste management approach which will be decided upon by the Government of Canada. Audited financial statements of the funds are posted on the NWMO website when they are provided by the financial institutions annually. They can be reviewed at: www.nwmo.ca/trustfunds.

In its first Annual Report following a government decision, the NWMO will propose a funding formula for the selected approach for approval by the Minister of Natural Resources Canada. As of December 31, 2006, the total value of the waste owners’ NFWA used fuel trusts and separate segregated funds they have for used fuel management was $3.3 billion.
On January 1, 2007 the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) assumed responsibility for directing and managing all aspects of the established technical research program on used nuclear fuel in Canada.

An important feature of the organization’s approach is interacting with national radioactive waste management programs in other countries. The NWMO has expanded its international collaboration with the signing this year of Agreements for Cooperation with Svensk Kärnbränslehantering AB, the Swedish Nuclear Fuel and Waste Management Company (SKB), and Posiva, the Finnish radioactive waste management company.

“These Agreements facilitate the exchange of information and participation in joint research and development activities of mutual interest,” said NWMO technical advisor, Sean Russell. “Both Sweden and Finland are considering approaches for long-term management of used nuclear fuel that are very similar to the NWMO’s recommended approach for Canada, and their waste management programs are more advanced with respect to technology development and the siting and approvals process.”

Sweden is operating the international Åspö Hard Rock Laboratory for underground research, development and demonstration of repository technology and is completing their site investigation activities. The country expects to complete a step-wise approach to select a site for a deep geological repository in the next few years.

In Finland, a willing host community and final site have been identified, and construction of the ONKALO underground characterization facility is well underway. Like the NWMO’s proposed approach, both Sweden and Finland are pursuing waste management strategies which include monitoring and the potential for retrieving used nuclear fuel. Both countries plan to have their deep geological repositories operating by 2020.

The cooperation agreements between the NWMO and the two countries cover all fields of radioactive waste management study ranging from management options and site investigation and characterization, to public communication and involvement and environmental impact assessment.