

Date: Meeting from February, 2017

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Subject line: Black River, Brokenhead, Hollow Water - Commentary / Nuclear Decommissioning project

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Comments:

As per our conversation on Friday att'd is a summary of comments heard during the two-day gathering held in Brokenhead in February 2017.

Let me know if you have any questions or if additional information is required.

Thank you.

Patricia Mitchell
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Black River First Nation – Nuclear Decommissioning Project

The following is a brief summary of comments made during the two-day meeting held in Brokenhead Ojibway Nation in February 2017. Members from Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, Hollow Water First Nation, and Black River First Nation were present at this meeting.

- What is Nuclear Waste;
- Why did the government allow this nuclear project on our traditional territory;
- What will happen if the containment units that will be staying in the ground deteriorate;
- Who will notify us if & when there are leaks;
- What will happen to if there is a leak;
- How will know—what happens when there is a leak;
- The facility is right next to the Wpg River, why would they put it there... we drink water from the river;
- The Winnipeg River leads right into Lake Winnipeg, where our drinking water comes from—what happens when there is a leak;
- Is it like oil, and just leaks into the ground;
- Why does the government always ask after the “fact”;
- Why are we always the last people to know what the people are doing to our traditional lands;
- The facility is 10 acres, how did this land look before this it was given away;
- What animals used this area;
- There have been a couple of leaks, how did this affect the animals;
- How are the fish affected by the spills/leaks;
- How do they know for certain that the concrete would leak when they bury this nuclear stuff in the ground;
- Concrete tends to corrode over time, who’s going to monitor this and how will it be fixed;
- When there is a spill, how does it impact the land, the water, the air;
- What happens to people if they get near or come in contact with the chemicals they are burying in the ground;
- How will the government compensate us for the spills that have happened;
- They are contaminating the water, land, and our livelihood;
- The government did not provide adequate funding for our communities to thoroughly assess the impacts of this project on our livelihood;
- How much are they paying other communities to store this garbage in their territory;
- We should be compensated the same as other communities that have this in their territories;
- Why are governments allowed to do this—put this into our territory without consulting us;
- The government is supposed to properly consult with all of our communities, why did they only fund one first nation to do this for us—that is not fair consultative process;
- What about accommodation measures... the consultation process says they are supposed to accommodate us for our losses, will they do that here;
- The government should be compensating us for as long as this facility is here; they’ve already gotten away with running this place without our involvement;

- This facility is near a resource that needs to be protected, and that's water, how will they protect water;
- We need more time to review what exactly this project is all about; we need to discuss this with our community members—we need to translate in our own language what the government is proposing here;
- What will happen after they shut this project down;
- Where are they taking this material once its torn down;
- The presenters (CNL) claim this is a minor project, and they would drink from the water if there was spill—we don't believe that; what are they getting from this project in terms of funding;
- Will our communities have any opportunities to work on the decommissioning;
- Where's all our members, why are they not working here—side by side with these people so that we job shadow them;
- These people /CNL are speaking in language, using terminology that is not in our language, how can we explain this to our elders;
- Why is government allowed to do this to our land and use their lawyers to help them—where's our lawyers;
- We need legal expertise to help us with this project, to understand it, to determine what our rights are;
- We need nuclear scientists to come help explain this project to us;
- We need experts that are not hired by the government to help explain this project to our members—they need to come to our communities and explain how this nuclear projects works—what is being proposed;
- We want to see what happens if there is a spill; can they provide an example... do a simulation experiment;
- This facility is near an area that is very special to our people—we want to know how it will impact that—and how it impacted it... how it affected us;
- There have been spills before—how was this detected? How much of a spill? What happens to the people, the land, the water?
- Does the government get a fine when there is a spill, what is the environmental consequence if the government cause permanent damage;
- The government talks to us about watching what we spill on the ground (change oil in our yards) or watch we spill on the water—well who's watching them, how do they get charged if they cause environmental damage;
- We never needed all this new stuff, oil, cars, etc., and yet when the new people came—their technology hurt us... they took our lands where we hunt; our rivers are dammed up and our fishing is limited, when will we be compensated for our losses---it seems as though they are the only to benefit from these projects, while we lose our way of life;
- What happens if we say we don't want this project in our territory—will the government listen;
- How will they involve us in this process—it has to be more than just one meeting; and more of our own people are needed to deal with the project proper... we can't rely on one community to do this for us;
- How many people has the government hired to look after this project for them—and here they only give us one person—that is not fair at all;
- How many people has Black River had to work with so far on this project;

- Has the government helped Black River to properly prepare for this project; how much funding is set aside for our organizations to review this kind of project;
- It seems like nuclear waste is a huge environmental red flag—why was the funding so limited for Black River to hire an expert to review this project for us;
- This project goes beyond the ten thousand acres of land that this facility sits on—it goes into the water—the Winnipeg River... the government needs to be reminded of this; we want to study the entire area that this project affects;
- We want to know how other projects look after they have been decommissioned—how is the land used;
- Are those other projects near major river systems, like this one;
- The government needs to provide long term funding for our communities to properly monitor this project for the long term;
- Our people still hunt, fish, and trap in this area—what impact does it have on this;
- How will we know for certain what the impacts are if we can't fully assess this project;
- It is very upsetting and frustrating that the government allowed this project to be placed here in our traditional territory without our consent—how will they compensate us... how will they involve us to address this project;
- Can this facility ever blow up if terrorists knew it was here;
- What exactly are they are trying to store in the ground;
- Ten thousand acres of land is a huge area, and is larger than our communities—and doesn't even include the water portions that it has impacted—that is land & water that could have been used for our traditional practises...will the government replace what we've lost;
- The government, by allowing these types of projects, is impacting our lives, our ability to practice our cultural & traditional livelihood;
- What kind of actions can be taken to address the impacts of this project on our traditional territory—they call it mitigation measures—what exactly that mean too, how can they fix land & water that has been contaminated by nuclear waste;
- If government had to consult us years ago—would they have still put this project here if we said no—how will they listen to our concerns now;
- Why did Black River have to use the majority of the little funding they got, to pay for the whole meeting—how come CNL didn't pay for the majority of meeting costs;
- What are decommissioned sites used for after they are done;
- How many different agencies is the government partnering with on this project; how much are those partners getting paid by the government;
- Why is the government using third parties to deal with us on this issue, a company like CNL is not a government—they are not responsible for the Lands--the federal government is;
- Will the Canadian government commit to fulfilling their duty to look after our lands—our traditional territory; they are not doing a very good job;
- CNL gives us information that we cannot even understand—how are we supposed to understand this project thoroughly;
- What are these other partners, organizations from this project; the people that are all working there, how much are they making;
- Why is the government not paying Black River or someone from each our communities the same amount;

- Why are the scientists who have the degrees always paid more than those of us that know the land by living on it, not learned from a book, but direct experience;
- For the decommissioning, why are our communities, our machines, our corporations not being given direct contracts to participate – CNL said we have to bid on tenders;
- Where are the opportunities for our communities to gain some direct benefits from the decommissioning of this facility—we don't have million dollar machines that would allow us to be even with other construction companies and yet they want us to “bid” ...we will be at a disadvantage;
- It seems like companies will come in, take what they want—make money, and leave; we will be left with contaminated land & water. The government needs to explain how this will be mitigated;
- This facility has been here over 50 years, and the government only gave us a short time to assess its impacts on our ancestral territory, and on our water—what is the big rush; they should have properly funded Black River to hire experts;
- We have used our territories since the beginning of time, but when this new government came along they put in timelines, they put in restrictions, boundaries, that dictated when, where, how etc., we could use lands that once belonged to us; we never gave up these lands—they were taken without our consent; we never got anything when they took these lands;
- We want to know how an environmental process is supposed to protect our lands and waters, when we have never had any input on creating these laws—the government needs to engage us on all of this
- CNL said they are planning to remove some of the material from this site, and take it somewhere else, what studies are being done there;
- What other options are available to us, rather than burying this stuff in the ground, how will be involved;
- We've heard it's (this waste) is going to Ontario somewhere, what is being offered in terms of compensation to those places to store this material they are removing from here;
- Transporting this material on this highway seems like a dangerous plan, what is the plans if something happens during transportation;
- When the facility is being decommissioned, how does affect the people working there;
- When we went on site a visit, we had to go through a rigorous process to get into the facility—what exactly is being stored there, and what kind of damage can it do if was ever taken over by terrorists or something;
- Is there anywhere else in Canada this type of facility exists; is that useable;
- By leaving this stuff in the ground, how will this impact over years—how will it affect our people; it's the river, what happens when the land erodes, will this garbage now be stored in the water—and will the materials capping it disintegrate faster;
- How does the government engage on other projects, like the mines; is there short timelines, are those projects adequately funded;
- How will the government and the agencies they have hired, address or consider our aboriginal & treaty rights on this project long term;
- How are we supposed to be okay knowing this stuff will be stored in our traditional territory; this will cause long term chronic stress to our people—how will the government address this;

- The ACEL and CNL both seem to be minimizing this project and the impacts it will have—but we know that nuclear waste is not natural to land, water, and air—it is very disturbing that our concerns and issues, are not being considered indefinitely; we don't want our following generations to have to deal with this project;
- The majority of materials gathered for this interim report period seems one sided; all our community members did not have an opportunity to comment on this project; the materials or comments taken by CNL or ACEL to date are one sided;
- Our members were not given ample time, or adequate funding to properly assess this project and its long term impacts;
- When they start to decommissioning—how will all this activity affect the environment around it; how will the animals be affected—how will impact hunting & trapping;
- How will the government monitor impacts to the air from the decommissioning;
- How will they mitigate the airs or dust that will settle on the water from the decommissioning;
- What parts of the facility are all contaminated—the government hasn't told us what impacts will it have on humans, lands, water, air—when the dust starts flying;
- How will the change in governments affect this project if it stays here forever; who will have the power to determine how this project will be monitored if they bury this material here;
- What say will our members have in the long term monitoring of this project;