

From: [We the Nuclear Free North](#)

Sent: Thursday, June 12, 2025 10:38:49 AM

To: [Prime Minister](#); [Minister of Energy and Natural Resources](#); [Minister of Environment and Climate Change](#)

Cc: pm@pm.gc.ca; NRCan.Minister-Ministre.RNCan@canada.ca; [Ministre / Minister \(ECCC\)](#)

Subject: Nuclear Waste Transportation and Burial; Results of Survey on NWMO Operations

Sensitivity: Normal

Attachments:

[WTNFN_Letter-to-Ministers_12June2025.pdf](#); [WTNFN Survey on NWMO Operations_Results Report_June2025.pdf](#)
; [Backgrounder_NuclearWasteBurialTransportation_June2025.pdf](#);

PDFS ATTACHED

June 12, 2025

Right Honourable Mark Carney

Prime Minister of Canada

The Honourable Tim Hodgson

Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

The Honourable Julie Dabrusin

Minister of Environment and Climate Change

House of Commons

Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister and Ministers Hodgson and Dabrusin:

Re. Nuclear Waste Transportation and Burial; Results of Survey on NWMO Operations

In these still early years of your new government, we appreciate that there are many important issues requiring your attention, and we write today about one of them: the proposal to transport, process and bury all of Canada's nuclear fuel waste at the Revell site in Treaty #3 territory in northwestern Ontario.

At this point there are decades of history to this issue. We have attached a [backgrounder](#) with additional information, but we will preface our letter today with some key milestones.

It is twenty years since the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) provided the federal government with their [recommended approach](#) to the long-term management of high-level nuclear waste and fifteen years since the NWMO launched their site search. Five years ago, the NWMO shortlisted to two candidate sites – the Teeswater site in South Bruce in southwestern Ontario and the Revell site between Ignace and Dryden in northwestern Ontario. In November 2024 the NWMO announced that they had [selected](#) the Revell site, in the heart of Treaty #3 territory in northwestern Ontario.

There are three key issues:

- 1) The federal government has not provided sufficient oversight or course correction to the NWMO's siting process and project development
- 2) Twenty years after being proposed – and then accepted by the federal government two years later – the

NWMO's proposal remains conceptual in all key technical areas

3) The NWMO's siting process has been divisive and manipulative, and has provoked widespread criticism and opposition, including from First Nations, Treaty organizations, municipalities and civil society organizations

Every year the Nuclear Waste Management Organization releases their [annual report](#) and a five year "[implementation plan](#)" which – according to the NWMO – sets out what the nuclear waste corporation will be doing over the coming years. The NWMO also invites feedback through a [survey](#).

We've heard from many that they are reluctant to provide the NWMO with their personal information, and they are uncertain how the NWMO will use their responses. But we think it's important to hear the views and responses of Canadians to the NWMO's plans and proposal to transport, process, bury and then abandon the high-level nuclear fuel waste from all Canadian reactors at the NWMO's selected site in the heart of Treaty #3 territory in northwestern Ontario. To achieve that, on May 27th we launched a ten-day [survey](#) on the NWMO's operations and their "implementation plan" for the coming years. We assured respondents that their personal information was being collected only to verify their response, and would not be shared with industry or government, but that the results of the survey would be reported to the federal Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change (with a copy provided to the NWMO).

The Invitation to complete the survey was distributed by email and through social media on a wide variety of sites, and over 300 responses were received. Just under 60% of respondents were from northern Ontario, 36% were from the rest of Canada, and the remainder international or unknown. Respondents include nuclear industry employees, Indigenous people, residents of Ignace and members of Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation, and others from across northern Ontario and across Canada.

[Survey results](#) are outlined in more detail in the attached report, but the results should be sobering for both your government and for the Nuclear Waste Management Organization.

Overwhelmingly, respondents expressed a negative view of NWMO operations:

- 94% were not confident that the NWMO's "safety culture" would keep Canadians safe
- A very large majority found that NWMO communications were not transparent or honest
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- 96% were not comfortable with the nuclear industry being in charge of the NWMO
- 92% did not believe that the siting process was fair or gained the necessary consent

Throughout the NWMO's lengthy siting processes there have been many expressions of opposition to and rejection of the NWMO's siting process and their project. These expressions have come in many forms, including a [resolution](#) passed by Grand Council Treaty #3 just weeks before the NWMO announced the selection of the Revell site – in the heart of Treaty #3 territory – in November 2024. More recently, Eagle Lake First Nation has initiated [legal action](#) against the NWMO's site selection. Earlier resolutions have been passed by [Nishnawbe Aski Nation](#), [Anishnabek Nation](#), and [many](#) First Nations and municipalities.

We know the NWMO and other nuclear industry representatives meet regularly with elected officials and senior civil servants. We also know through our analysis of responses to Access to Information requests that the real situation on the ground is not making its way to the Ministers whose portfolios include nuclear safety, environmental project, public safety and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

As your new government charts the course for Canada, we respectfully request to meet and discuss the Nuclear Waste Management Organization's approach and project, and to outline for you how your government could potentially regain the trust and respect that has been lost through previous governments sitting on the sidelines.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to a continued and productive conversation.

Sincerely,

Brennain Lloyd, Northwatch , North Bay
Kathleen Skead, Wauzhushk Onigum Nation member, Keewatin
Dodie LeGassick, Environment North, Thunder Bay
Brien Polak, Sunset Country Spirit Alliance, Dryden

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WE THE NUCLEAR FREE NORTH

Box 10307 Thunder Bay ON P7B 6T8 www.WeTheNuclearFreeNorth.ca

1 855 225 8055 (toll free)

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Re. **Nuclear Waste Transportation and Burial; Results of Survey on NWMO Operations**

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There are three key issues:

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- 2) Twenty years after being proposed – and then accepted by the federal government two years later – the NWMO's proposal remains conceptual in all key technical areas
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[Survey results](#) are outlined in more detail in the attached report, but the results should be sobering for both your government and for the Nuclear Waste Management Organization. Overwhelmingly, respondents expressed a negative view of NWMO operations:

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Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to a continued and productive conversation.

Sincerely,
<Original signed by>

Brennain Lloyd
Northwatch
North Bay

<Original signed by>

Dodie LeGassick
Environment North
Thunder Bay

<Original signed by>

Káthleen Skéad
Wauzhushk Onigum Nation member
Keewatin

<Original signed by>

Brien Polak
Sunset Country Spirit Alliance
Dryden

[We the Nuclear Free North](#) is an alliance of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and groups opposing a Deep Geological Repository for nuclear waste in Northern Ontario. We oppose the transport, burial and abandonment of this radioactive waste in our northern watersheds.

*Our alliance is honoured to have received the name **Tataganobin**: looking far ahead into the future. [Learn more](#) about who we are, and the origin and meaning of this name.*



2025 Survey of Public Views on NWMO Operations

JUNE 2025



Introduction

The [Nuclear Waste Management Organization](#) (NWMO) is comprised of Ontario Power Generation, Hydro Quebec and New Brunswick Power, who were mandated under the [Nuclear Fuel Waste Act](#) (2002) to investigate and recommend a long-term management option for all of Canada’s high level nuclear fuel waste. The NWMO’s “[Adaptive Phased Management](#)” approach includes a site selection process to locate a deep geological repository for all of Canada’s high-level radioactive waste and then development of the repository and associated operations. NWMO launched their siting process in 2010. A total of 22 municipalities were the subject of NWMO investigations between 2010 and 2020. In 2020 the NWMO short-listed to two candidate sites.

On November 28th the NWMO announced their selection of the Revell site - in the heart of Treaty #3 territory in northwestern Ontario and in the headwaters of the Wabigoon watershed – as their intended site. In December, Eagle Lake First Nation announced their legal action against the NWMO selection of the Revell site.

The NWMO proposal is still in the concept stage. NWMO says they will initiate the assessment process in 2025 and submit a full proposal in 2028.

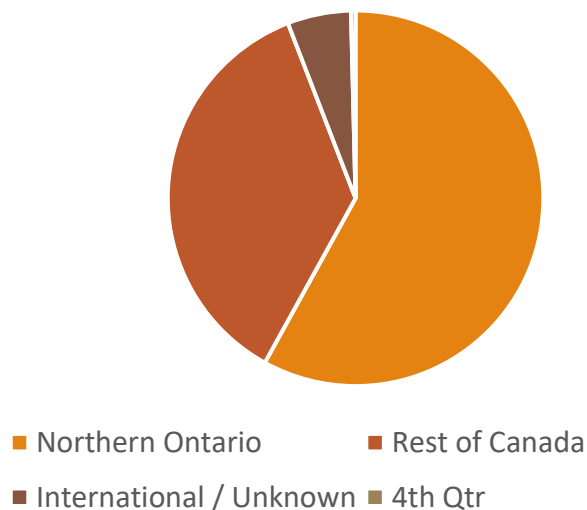
Every year the [Nuclear Waste Management Organization](#) (NWMO) releases their [annual report](#) and a five year “[implementation plan](#)” which – according to the NWMO – sets out what the nuclear waste corporation will be doing over the coming years. The NWMO also invites feedback through a [survey](#). WTNFN had heard from many that they are reluctant to provide the NWMO with their personal information, and they are uncertain how the NWMO will use their responses. Providing an alternative means for Canadians to express their views motivated the deployment of an alternate survey.

We the Nuclear Free North is a not-for-profit organization that tracks a nuclear waste burial project proposed for northwestern Ontario. *We the Nuclear Free North* has released the results of a recent survey gauging public attitudes towards the Nuclear Waste Management Organization and its project. *We the Nuclear Free North’s* survey results show an overwhelmingly negative response to the NWMO’s project and communications.

An invitation to complete the survey was distributed by email and through social media on a wide variety of sites. Over 300 responses were received in the ten-day survey period. Just under 60% of respondents were from northern Ontario (northwestern and northeastern), 36% were from the rest of Canada, and the remainder international or unknown.

Respondents include nuclear industry employees, Indigenous people, residents of Ignace and members of Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation, and residents from across northern Ontario and across Canada.

Location of Respondents



Summary

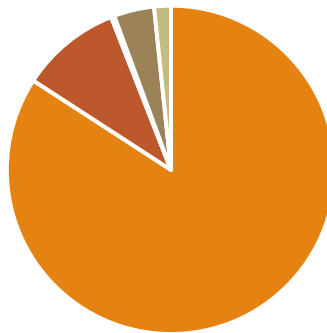
Overwhelming, respondents expressed a negative view of NWMO operations:

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- A very large majority found that NWMO communications were not transparent or honest.
- 93% were not confident in the NWMO's ability to implement the safe, long-term management of nuclear fuel waste.
- 94% were not confident that NWMO's work aligned with Reconciliation or Indigenous Knowledge.
- 96% were not comfortable with the nuclear industry being in charge of the NWMO
- 92% did not believe that the siting process was fair or gained the necessary consent

Results

1. How confident are you that the nuclear industry's (NWMO's) stated safety culture sufficiently protects Canadians from the dangers of nuclear fuel waste?

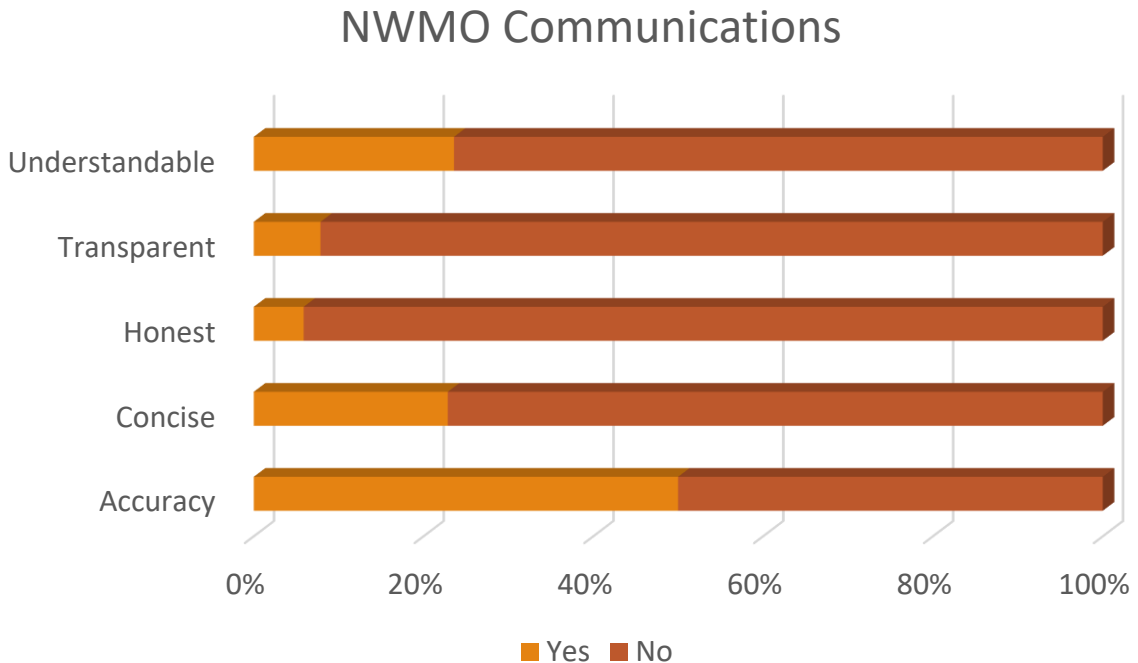
NWMO's stated safety culture sufficiently protects Canadians from the dangers of nuclear fuel waste



■ Not at all Confident ■ Not very confident ■ Unsure
■ Very Confident ■ Confident ■ No response

94% were not confident that the NWMO's safety culture would keep Canadians safe.

2. The NWMO asserts that they strive to make their plans clear and concise, and to use plain language to ensure their plans are understandable to a broad audience. Do you feel that information made available or promoted by the NWMO is (select all that apply)

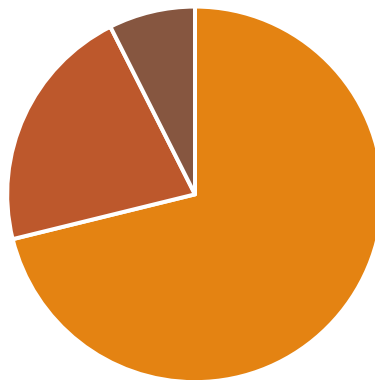


A very large majority found that NWMO communications were not transparent or honest.

3. Have you taken or looked at the NWMO's survey? (You can access it [HERE](#)) If yes, what do you think the goal of their survey is?

Every year the [Nuclear Waste Management Organization](#) (NWMO) releases their [annual report](#) and a five year "[implementation plan](#)" which – according to the NWMO – sets out what the nuclear waste corporation will be doing over the coming years. The NWMO also invites feedback through a [survey](#).

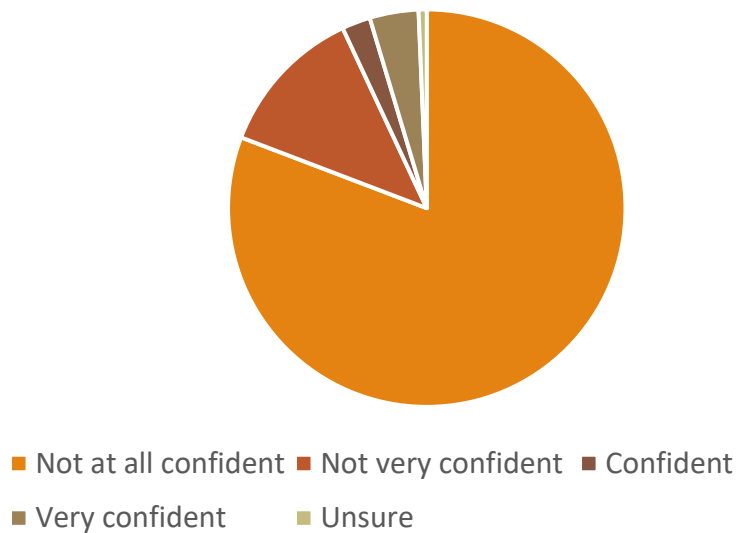
Purpose of NWMO Survey



- Bolster their message
- Advertise their plan
- Gather feedback

4. How confident are you in the NWMO's ability to implement the safe, long-term management of Canada's used nuclear fuel, in a manner that protects people and the environment for generations to come?

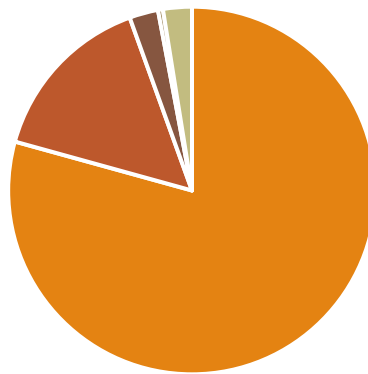
Confidence in Long-term Safety of NWMO Project



93% were not confident in the NWMO's ability to implement the safe, long-term management of nuclear fuel waste.

5. The NWMO's survey states that "Integral to all our work is our commitment to Reconciliation and aligning with Indigenous Knowledge." How confident are you that this is true?

Reconciliation is Integral to NWMO's Work

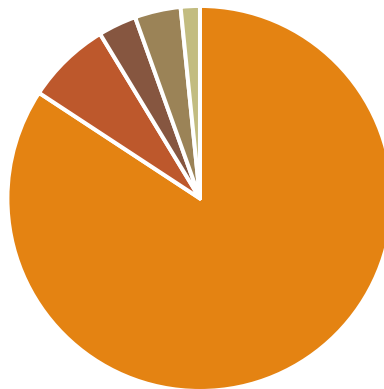


■ Not at all confident ■ Not Very Confident ■ Confident
■ Very confident ■ Unsure

94% were not confident that NWMO's work aligned Reconciliation or Indigenous Knowledge.

6. How comfortable are you with the fact that the NWMO – the organization the federal government has given responsibility for nuclear waste management - is headed by nuclear industry people, rather than being an arm's-length organization?

Comfort with nuclear industry control of NWMO

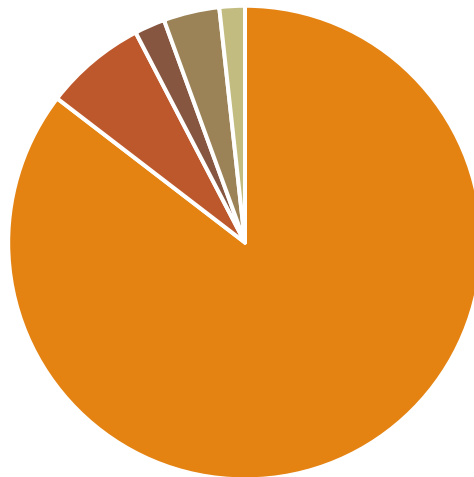


■ Not at all comfortable ■ Not very comfortable ■ Comfortable
■ Very comfortable ■ Unsure

96% were not comfortable with the nuclear industry being in charge of the NWMO.

7. The NWMO's site selection decision was based on a process conferring authority to two communities to consider becoming "willing hosts". The NWMO has stated that the concerns of other communities in the vicinity and along the transportation route would be taken into consideration in their site selection decision. Do you believe that their site selection process was fair and based on consent from all who will be impacted by the site selection decision?

Confidence in Siting Process



■ Not at all confident ■ Not very confident ■ Confident ■ Very confident ■ Unsure

92% did not believe that the siting process was fair or gained the necessary consent.

Conclusions

The results of the survey have been reported by [We the Nuclear Free North](#) to the federal Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, along with a letter summarizing key messages from the survey results and providing backgrounders on the NWMO project, site selection and public and Indigenous opposition. A copy of the survey report has also been provided to the NWMO.

In writing to the federal Ministers, the group also conveyed that throughout the NWMO's lengthy siting processes there have been many expressions of opposition to and rejection of the NWMO's siting process and their project.

These [expressions](#) have come in many forms, including resolutions passed by Grand Council Treaty #3 just weeks before the NWMO announced the selection of the Revell site – in the heart of Treaty 3 territory – in November 2024. More recently, Eagle Lake First Nation has initiated legal action against the NWMO's site selection. Earlier resolutions have been passed by Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Anishnabek Nation, and many First Nations and municipalities.

For more information visit www.wethenuclearfreenorth.ca.

The [Nuclear Waste Management Organization](#) (NWMO) is comprised of Ontario Power Generation, Hydro Quebec and New Brunswick Power, corporations mandated under the [Nuclear Fuel Waste Act](#) (2002) to investigate and recommend a long-term management option for all of Canada's high-level nuclear fuel waste. In 2007 the federal government accepted the NWMO's "[Adaptive Phased Management](#)" approach, including a site selection process to locate a deep geological repository for all of Canada's high-level radioactive fuel waste and then development of the repository and associated operations. NWMO launched their siting process in 2010. A total of 22 municipalities were the subject of NWMO investigations.

Throughout its siting process the NWMO repeatedly declared that it would not select a site unless there was an "informed and willing community" and the community had made a "compelling demonstration of willingness". The Township of Ignace was deemed "willing" by the NWMO on the basis of an online poll that asked residents if they supported continuing in the NWMO process. The poll did not ask if respondents supported the NWMO proposal to build a deep geological repository at the Revell site. In October 2024, Grand Council Treaty #3 chiefs unanimously passed a resolution opposing the DGR in Treaty #3 territory. On November 18th, 2024, Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation announced that they accepted further site studies being done but that they had not consented to the project.

On November 28th the NWMO announced their selection of the Revell site - in the heart of Treaty #3 territory in northwestern Ontario and in the headwaters of the Wabigoon watershed – as their intended site. In December, Eagle Lake First Nation announced their legal action against the NWMO selection of the Revell site.

The NWMO proposal is still in the concept stage. NWMO says they will initiate the assessment process in 2025 and submit a full proposal in 2028.

There is [no deep geological repository](#) for high-level nuclear fuel waste operating anywhere in the world, despite decades of effort by the nuclear industry. Some repositories have been proposed and then cancelled, and others have been proposed and are under review (the proposed repository in Sweden has been in the regulatory process since 2011), but none have received full approvals or been brought into operation.

NWMO's plan to bury and abandon all of Canada's high-level nuclear fuel waste in northwestern Ontario will involve [2-3 shipments per day for more than 50 years](#), with each truck hauling 35 tonnes of radioactive waste per trip. Over 90% of the shipments will come from southern Ontario, averaging 1,700 km per trip, with most of those kilometres travelled on the poorly maintained and mostly 2-lane roads of northeastern and northwestern Ontario. The remaining shipments will be coming from the east – Chalk River in the Ottawa Valley, Quebec and New Brunswick. Again, mostly 2-lane roads, and – again – riding a road of radioactive risk that will cut across northern Ontario. In May 2025 Alberta Energy announced their plan to construct four large reactors 30 km north of Peace River in northern Alberta and their intention to [transfer the high-level radioactive wastes to the NWMO](#) for transportation, burial and abandonment in the Revell site.

Each shipment will result in low levels of radioactivity being emitted, and if there is an accident that results in a breach of the containers it is expected that the releases would be much larger. There is [no level of exposure](#) to ionizing radiation that does not pose an associated risk to human health. There is very little experience with nuclear fuel waste transportation in Canada, international experience has a mixed record, and there are serious gaps in the testing of the transportation containers and training for emergency responders. There is no experience internationally that is equivalent to the distance, volume, frequency and duration of the NWMO's proposed transportation program.

Nuclear waste is a problem. The nuclear industry is offering false solutions.

Small Modular Reactors Would Produce Novel and Dangerous Nuclear Waste

If built and operated, SMRs would generate far more waste (of all types) per unit of electricity generated than current reactor types. High-level waste cannot be fully recycled in SMRs, despite claims of nuclear industry lobbyists. In certain types of SMRs the volume of high-level radioactive waste with long life could be reduced, but the volume and complexity of low and intermediate-level waste and used nuclear fuel could be substantially increased.

Fuel waste from SMRs such as molten salt reactors would require technically challenging and expensive processing prior to long-term storage or disposal. Fuel waste from sodium-cooled SMRs would be complex and reactive because sodium is corrosive and can ignite easily on contact with air. This places an additional burden on waste storage, packaging, and proposed geologic disposal.

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) does not consider waste in its reviews of SMR prototypes. Waste could be considered in subsequent licensing processes, but without considering how waste varies with reactor design. The CNSC may even allow SMRs to be abandoned in place (“in-situ decommissioning”) if their removal is not “practicable”.

Canada’s 2020 Review of Radioactive Waste Policy Left the Nuclear Industry in Charge of Radioactive Waste

In October 2023 the federal Minister of Natural Resources [endorsed](#) a proposal from the Nuclear Waste Management Organization that they be mandated to deliver an “integrated strategy” for the long-term management of intermediate-level radioactive waste. The NWMO’s initial proposal was a second deep geological repository specifically for “intermediate” level radioactive waste, but NWMO has now indicated that this second DGR may also be used for fuel wastes from new reactors, including small modular reactors and larger new-design reactors, such as the MONARK or AP1000. The NWMO was expected to deliver its siting plan for the additional DGR in March 2025. NWMO released a “discussion paper” in June 2025 on the siting process for a geological repository for intermediate and high-level wastes.

Burying Uncertainty – Deep Geological Repositories for Nuclear Waste

For the last decade, an organization of nuclear power companies called the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) has been carrying out a siting process to identify a location for a “deep geological repository” (DGR) in which they intend eventually to abandon all of Canada’s stockpiles of high-level radioactive wastes created by using nuclear power to produce electricity.

Rather than providing a solution, the NWMO “concept” of a deep geological repository will expand the nuclear footprint and create new risks and uncertainties for generations far into the future.

There will be radioactive releases from the NWMO’s operation, including from the processing plant at the DGR site and from the DGR itself. The repository tunnels and emplacement rooms will be too radioactive to allow workers to be present, but the air from deep underground will be released to the surface unfiltered.

Waste will be transported to the site for more than 50 years. The NWMO’s reference plan includes 2-3 trucks per day and/or rail shipments, transporting the highly radioactive waste from the reactor stations to the DGR site for 50 years or longer. Each shipment will release low levels of radiation, and an accident could result in much higher releases. There is no safe level of exposure to ionizing radiation.

Residents downstream and along the transportation route were shut out of the NWMO’s site selection process, despite the NWMO saying they would not proceed without an “informed and willing host”.

In November 2024 the NWMO selected the Revell site in northwestern Ontario, one month after Grand Council Treaty #3 passed a unanimous resolution expressing opposition. Eagle Lake First Nation has since launched a legal challenge of the NWMO site selection.

There is no other operating deep geological repository for high-level radioactive fuel waste anywhere in the world. When this experiment fails, the downstream waters are at risk, including international waters.