



MEMORANDUM

TO: Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC)

CC: Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC)

FROM: Daniel Stuckless, 4A Solutions

ON BEHALF OF: Mikisew Cree First Nation Government and Industry Relations

DATE: May 14, 2025

RE: Mikisew Cree First Nation Comments on the Peace River Nuclear Power Project Initial Project Description

Introduction

This memorandum is submitted on behalf of the Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN) in response to the Initial Project Description (IPD) for the proposed Energy Alberta Peace River Nuclear Power Project. While MCFN recognizes the proponent's stated commitment to engagement and environmental stewardship, we express deep concern with both the federal oversight and regulatory posture of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) to protect our Aboriginal and Treaty Rights. Our comments reflect the cumulative, interjurisdictional, and systemic failings that have infringed our Section 35 rights, our health, our lands, and our people.

Summary of Core Concerns

1. Cumulative Effects are Ignored

The proposed nuclear facility cannot be assessed in isolation. The region is already burdened by:



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- **Oilsands development** in northeastern Alberta, causing large-scale land fragmentation, toxic tailings, and degradation of the Peace-Athabasca Delta.
- **Hydroelectric development** in British Columbia, including the Site C dam, which continues to alter Peace River flow regimes and impact aquatic ecosystems.
- **Provincial regulatory failures**, particularly the Alberta Government's chronic inadequacy in enforcing environmental protections and upholding Treaty obligations.

MCFN has raised these cumulative effects in multiple regulatory and land-use forums for decades and is well documented. Both Federal and Provincial Crowns have constructive knowledge of these concerns through thousands of consultations. The IPD needs to meaningfully acknowledge or address these layers of impact, including transboundary and inter-provincial dynamics. This complexity is currently missing from the IPD.

Environmental Concern Areas and Technical Deficiencies

2. Incomplete and Vague Waste Management Plan

- Energy Alberta was inconsistent and evasive during the May 1st information session, contradicting documentation that refers to nuclear waste disposal at the NWMO's Ontario site in Ignace.
- No alternate waste storage site has been disclosed, raising red flags for long-term containment, transportation risk, and interjurisdictional responsibility.
- Without a final, confirmed waste management plan, the IAAC and CNSC should not allow the assessment to proceed. These details are essential to understanding impacts across Mikisew's territory.



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- To be absolutely clear, Mikisew opposes in situ decommissioning of any nuclear waste for this project.

3. Risk to Water Quality

- There is no commitment to detailed modelling or assessment of radiological or chemical discharge into the Peace River.
- The plant proposes water intake and release back into the river, with insufficient information on impacts to aquatic life, community water use, or downstream Nations.
- Please add adherence to Mikisew Cree First Nations, Water Quality Criteria for Indigenous Uses as a regulatory limit.

4. Wildlife and Soil Impacts

- The project area includes sensitive habitat for woodland caribou, bears, migratory birds, and medicinal plant ecosystems which are traditionally used.
- The IPD notes 640 hectares of land clearing, but there is no long-term soil remediation strategy for contamination from radioactive materials or spills during the construction and operational phases.

5. No Alberta-Specific Emergency Planning

- The IPD acknowledges that Alberta has no existing nuclear emergency response framework. The exclusion zones are based on Ontario examples, which are inapplicable in a remote and vulnerable region like the Peace River basin.
- No credible or actionable plan has been developed for emergency evacuation, communication, or protection of Indigenous communities.
- A requirement for a Mikisew Specific Emergency Plan and Resource and Capacity Commitment in the event of an emergency.



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Indigenous Rights, Title, and Governance

6. Lack of Co-Development or Partnership

- There is no proposed role for Indigenous Guardians, community-based monitors, or co-management structures. This undermines Indigenous stewardship and OCAP® principles.

7. Inadequate Traditional Land Use Recognition

- While the IPD references potential impacts on traditional land use, it lacks any specific mapping, cumulative analysis, or commitments to accommodate or avoid key cultural areas.
- The project overlaps regions used for hunting, fishing, gathering, and ceremony, all protected under Treaty 8 and affirmed in constitutional law.

8. Health Impacts are Underserved

- The IPD should address intergenerational health concerns for Indigenous peoples exposed to environmental pollutants.
- Given historical experiences with uranium mining, tailings, and the health legacy of oilsands proximity, the omission of Indigenous health studies in the assessment plan is unacceptable. Mikisew have been requesting a comprehensive health study since the early 2000's.

Recommendations

MCFN calls on the IAAC and CNSC to:



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1. Require:

- A comprehensive cumulative effects analysis;
- A formal Traditional Knowledge and Land Use Study is undertaken specific by MCFN, including a Rights and Culture Assessment;
- An Alberta-specific nuclear emergency plan is developed in collaboration with affected Nations.

2. Require the Proponent to enter a formal agreement with MCFN outlining:

- Roles for Indigenous Guardians and environmental monitors;
- Funding and support for capacity building, including technical review and legal support;
- Commitments to Indigenous procurement, training, and long-term benefit sharing.

3. Demand accountability from Alberta’s regulators, including the ACO and Alberta Environment, for historically dismissing MCFN concerns on land access, wildlife impacts, and water degradation.

4. An accommodation table is required as early as possible. If the newly elected federal government is committed to action, we request this table prior to the closure of the 180 day period following the finalization of the IPD.

Conclusion

The Peace River Nuclear Power Project presents a significant threat to the lands, waters, rights, and future of the Mikisew Cree First Nation. It is not sufficient for Canada to claim alignment



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with UNDRIP while allowing federal agencies like the CNSC and IAAC to push projects forward without Indigenous consent or participation.

We urge IAAC to fulfill its mandate with integrity, to demand a higher standard of transparency, and to centre Indigenous rights—not merely as a checkbox but as a constitutional and moral imperative.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Stuckless

Principal, 4A Solutions

On behalf of Mikisew Cree First Nation



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