



May 17, 2022

Chair Rox-Anne Moore
Members of the Board
The Local Services Board of Nolalu
1878 Hwy 608
South Gilles ON P0T 2V0

SENT BY EMAIL

Dear Chair Moore and Board Members,

Re. **Who Should Decide About the Transportation and Burial of Nuclear Waste in Northwestern Ontario?**

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 to eventually abandon all of Canada’s stockpiles of high-level radioactive wastes. These wastes have been created by using nuclear power to produce electricity. The provincial utilities that operate the reactors now find themselves with 60,000 tonnes of highly radioactive waste, which will be extremely dangerous for hundreds of thousands of years.

We have three key areas of concern with the NWMO project:

- **The NWMO is using the Township of Ignace as a proxy decision-maker**, excluding area residents and communities downstream from the site and along the transportation route. Ignace is more than 40 kilometres east of the candidate site in the Revell Lake area; Ignace should not be the decision-maker for all the communities downstream and along the transportation route. The risk will be borne by many; the decision cannot be made by just a few.
- **The NWMO has reserved the option of initiating transport of the radioactive waste to their selected site before determining if the geology of that site is appropriate.** Under this early-transport option, the NWMO could place the waste in what they call "shallow caverns". This possibility is often omitted from the NWMO descriptions. Other parts of the project are still in early design stages – for instance, the Used Fuel Packaging Plant, which has the potential to release radioactive contamination into the local area. The NWMO is looking for a community to say they are “willing and informed” before important information about the project is available.
- **There is no other operating deep geological repository for high-level radioactive fuel waste anywhere in the world.** If and when this experiment fails, the downstream waters are at risk; there are hundreds of thousands of people living downstream in the English River-Wabigoon and Turtle River-Lake of the Woods watersheds toward Lake Winnipeg, and radioactive releases from the repository could affect thousands of lakes, camps, lodges, cottagers, Indigenous hunting and harvesting areas, and businesses in Northwestern Ontario.

NWMO Focus on Northwestern Ontario

Early in 2020 the NWMO announced that it would focus on two communities: South Bruce in Bruce County in Southwestern Ontario, and Ignace, in Kenora District in Northwestern Ontario. However, the candidate DGR site in Northwestern Ontario is more than 40 kilometres outside Ignace’s municipal boundaries, and in a different watershed. Ignace has no authority over the Revell Lake area, which is just south of the hamlets of Borups Corners and Dymont, and roughly equidistant between Ignace and Dryden. Despite this, both the Township of Ignace and the NWMO are proceeding as if Ignace could in some way be a decision-maker in this siting process.

In August 2021 the **Township of Ignace**, the **Ignace Citizens Nuclear Liaison Committee (ICNLC)** and the **NWMO** released an [information package](#) and short survey to the residents of the Township of Ignace with the title “Ignace Willingness Project”. This package outlined that only the residents of the Township of Ignace are included in the decision-making process, even though the [potential site](#) is well outside the Township’s boundaries.

The [Ignace Willingness Project](#) is important because the NWMO has repeatedly stated they will only move ahead with their nuclear waste burial project if they have an “[informed and willing community](#)”. While the NWMO acknowledges Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation (WLO) as being “in the site selection process” they have not committed to rejecting the Revell Lake site if WLO does not express support for the project.

In December 2021, the Ignace municipal council made a decision that it will not be the residents of Ignace who will decide if Ignace is a “willing host” to the NWMO’s project; instead, Township Council will decide if Ignace is “willing”. There will be NO vote or referendum or ballot to measure the level of support among Ignace residents.

Time is becoming short. The NWMO intends to decide on its preferred site in 2023, presumably after some declaration of “willingness” – or of not being willing – is made on the part of Ignace and/or South Bruce. However, in the NWMO [siting process](#), **an environmental assessment will not be completed** until years after the decision about “willingness” is made and an agreement between the NWMO and the “host” community is formalized.

Even at this late point in the NWMO process, on the eve of the NWMO asking communities to declare their “willingness” to host the nuclear waste burial project, there is no complete description of the NWMO project. Many parts of the project, such as the used fuel packaging plant, are still not fully designed. Other parts, such as “shallow burial”, are optional but not included in most of the NWMO hand-out materials and presentations. The level of risk and of radioactive releases could change with different decisions the NWMO might make during the final project design, after “willingness” has been declared.

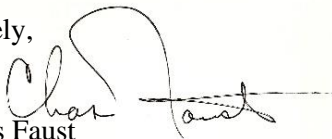
No community should be asked if it is “willing” to accept a project before they know fully and in detail what the project will include and how it will be carried out and the results of an independent environmental assessment.

We the Nuclear Free North is an alliance of organizations and residents opposed to the transportation and abandonment of high-level radioactive waste in Northern Ontario. Formed in 2020, we are committed to learning and sharing information about this project and engaging with our fellow residents and decision-makers across Northern Ontario about the risks this project brings.

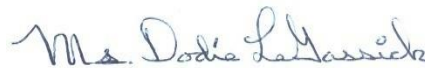
We are reaching out to you as community leaders in Northwestern Ontario. We would be pleased to provide you with additional information and analysis, either through presentations to your service board or more informally.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this detailed letter. For more information, backgrounders on key topics and videos of expert presentations, please visit our website at www.wethenuclearfreenorth.ca.

Sincerely,



Charles Faust
Nuclear Free Thunder Bay
City of Thunder Bay



Dodie LeGassik
Environment North
Kakabeka Falls, Municipal District of Thunder Bay



Brien Polek
Sunset Country Spirit Alliance
Oxdrift, Municipal District of Kenora



J.F. Kimberly
North West Nuclear Watch
Atikokan, Municipal District of Rainy River

Visit www.wethenuclearfreenorth.ca to learn more. Call us at 1 855 225 8055 or email nuclearfreenorth@gmail.com to arrange a meeting or presentation or to receive an information package