

Re: 'Nuclear Waste Management Organization' (NWMO)
Presentation to LAWSS on Thursday, December 5, 2019 (held at the
Tourism Board Room, Venetian Blvd)

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to present to your committee and provide follow-up information to your questions.

Ensuring the long-term, safe and secure management of used nuclear fuel is an important responsibility we all share. Today Canada's used nuclear fuel is safely stored on an interim basis at facilities near the reactor sites, but we must plan for the future. Canadians have told us that this generation has an ethical responsibility to find a long-term solution and not leave this burden to future generations.

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization is responsible for the safe, long-term management of Canada's used nuclear fuel, in a manner that protects both people and the environment. Currently the NWMO is leading a site selection process to identify a single, preferred location for a deep geological repository for used nuclear fuel, to be located in an area with informed and willing hosts.

This process is ongoing in two areas, Ignace, in northwestern Ontario and South Bruce in southern Ontario. Next steps include ongoing technical site evaluation work and continued engagement with the municipal and Indigenous communities in the potential siting areas. The NWMO expects to identify a single, preferred location for a deep geological repository by 2023.

For more information please visit our website at www.nwmo.ca and stay up to date on our work by following us on social media @NWMOCanada.

General questions from LAWSS Board members:

Q. Are there many communities actually interested in hosting the spent uranium?

A. In 2010 the NWMO initiated a site selection process with the goal to identify a single site for a deep geological repository in a willing

host community. By 2012 we had 22 communities express interest in learning more about the project and exploring their potential to host it. Since that time we have progressively narrowed our focus to two communities through a series of increasingly intensive technical studies and social engagement activities. We are currently advancing social and technical work in the Municipality of South Bruce in southern Ontario and the Township of Ignace in northwestern Ontario.

Q. Are some communities better positioned than others, geographically?

A. At this stage we have two communities that have a very strong potential to host the project. As we work towards identifying a single preferred site our work will focus on three areas: safety, transportation and partnership.

Q. When will a decision be made on all this?

A. The NWMO expects to be in a position to identify a single preferred site for a deep geological repository in a willing host community in 2023. Shortly after that, we expect to begin the rigorous set of regulatory processes that will need to be completed.

Q. How long will this underground repository have to be in existence?

A. Implementation of this national infrastructure project will take place over the course of approximately 150 years. After such time, future generations will make decisions about monitoring and decommissioning of the repository. The repository is designed to be passively safe after closure, with no need for human intervention and maintenance.

Q. Is spent uranium still radioactive?

A. Canada has been generating electricity from nuclear power for more than half a century. Used nuclear fuel is a by-product of this process. The radionuclides in the used fuel will decay with time. It will take about one million years for the radioactivity level to reach about that of an equivalent amount of natural uranium, which is why used fuel must be contained and isolated from people and the environment – essentially indefinitely.

Q. Because the repository is so deep, once you have filled everything in above ground, will farmers still be able to operate tractors and the like?

A. Yes, the repository is designed to safely contain and isolate the fuel from people and the environment indefinitely.

Q. When you go all over Canada with this presentation, what are you met with - does everyone have the same concerns?

A. We engage with thousands of Canadians every year through a wide range of forums and our goal is to ensure that people are in a place to make an informed decision about the project.

Through this ongoing dialogue we work to be responsive to citizen expectations, priorities and concerns. The feedback we get shapes the development of our policies, plans and activities.

Every year we publish a *What We Heard* report that summarizes what we are hearing from our ongoing dialogue and engagement activities. You can find the latest *What We Heard* report [here](#) or under the [report section](#) of our website.

Dialogue has been critical in implementing Canada's plan and is designed to encourage people to interact and reflect upon the views of others as they work together to reconcile those views with deeper values that underpin the choices facing us in decision-making.