

Subject: Letter to Minister O'Regan: Public Engagement in Government of Canada Review of Radioactive Waste Policy Framework

Date: Sat, 19 Sep 2020 04:53:56 -0400

From: Nuclear Waste Watch <nuclearwastewatch@gmail.com>

To: Hon. Seamus O'Regan <Seamus.OREgan@parl.gc.ca>

CC: Members of Cabinet, Mollie Johnson, Paul Lefebvre

September 18th, 2020

The Honourable Seamus O'Regan
Minister of Natural Resources
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Sent by email

Dear Minister O'Regan:

Re: Public Engagement in Government of Canada Review of Radioactive Waste Policy Framework

Thank you for your letter of July 10th, in response to the letter signed by over 100 civil society organizations who wrote in May to urge you to fully engage Canadians in your government's review of Canada's radioactive waste policy framework.

In your letter, you restated your government's commitment to consult and engage with all Canadians, which we appreciate. You also indicated that you would ask your staff to reach out to us in advance of the launch of the Government's engagement process to seek our advice on how best to solicit public feedback for the enhancement of the policy and development of a national strategy for the responsible management of nuclear waste in Canada.

Further to that, we are writing to advise you that the hundred-plus groups who wrote to you in May have remained in regular communication and continue to follow this file closely. We have recently formed a steering group to support the engagement of civil society organizations in the review, and to assist the Government of Canada in structuring and delivering an effective public involvement process. The steering committee includes representatives from New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and national organizations, and represents many decades of experience with radioactive waste issues in Canada and a wide cross-section of Canadians.

Please direct your staff to reach out to us at their earliest convenience, using the contact email nuclearwastewatch@gmail.com.

In addition, we would like to take this opportunity to restate our request for a meeting with you. As we expect you are aware, organizations who are now on the steering committee met with your Assistant Deputy Minister and with your Parliamentary Secretary earlier this year, and we found these to be productive interactions, and believe that your ADM and Parliamentary Secretary also found the meetings useful. As we communicated during those meetings, we would also like to meet with you, the Minister of Natural Resources.

Under separate cover we are writing to the Prime Minister asking him to ensure that all relevant departments are fully engaged in the Radioactive Waste Policy Framework review, and you will be copied on that correspondence.

Given your department's current initiatives with respect to small modular nuclear reactors, including the development and finalization of an "SMR Action Plan", the issue of radioactive waste and its responsible management becomes even more urgent. Similarly, three problematic proposals for the permanent disposition of Canada's legacy waste are currently proceeding through assessment processes in a near-policy vacuum. Logically, the review of the radioactive waste policies must take priority.

Thank you for your attention, and we look forward to our communications with your staff and to our eventual meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gordon Edwards, PhD
Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility
Montreal, Quebec

Theresa McClenaghan
Canadian Environmental Law Association
Toronto, Ontario

Dr. Susan O'Donnell, PhD
Coalition for Responsible Energy Development in New Brunswick (CRED-NB)
Rothesay, New Brunswick

Dave Taylor
Concerned Citizens of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Dr. Ole Hendrickson, PhD
Concerned Citizens of Renfrew County and Area
Pembroke, Ontario

Micheal Poellet
Inter-Church Uranium Committee (ICUC)
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Brennain Lloyd
Northwatch
North Bay, Ontario

Ginette Charbonneau, Physicist
Ralliement contre la pollution radioactive
Montreal, Quebec

cc. Paul Lefebvre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources
Mollie Johnson, Assistant Deputy Minister, Natural Resources Canada, Low Energy Carbon Sector
Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
Ministers of the federal Cabinet

REFERENCES:

1. Letter to The Honourable Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Natural Resources, Re: Canada Needs a National Radioactive Waste Policy, May 15, 2020
2. Letter from The Honourable Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Natural Resources, Re: Correspondence of May 15, 2020, on behalf of 100 public interest groups

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