Re: #17520 Deep Geologic Repository Project for Low and Intermediate Level Waste-Response to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency’s Joint Review Panel’s Recommendations to the Minister of Environment

The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) write to strongly support the position of our Federate the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) against the Canadian Environmental Assessment (CEAA) Joint Review Panel’s (JRP) recent recommendation to the Minister of Environment. This project would allow Ontario Power Generation (OPG) to bury hundreds of thousands of tons of low and medium, very dangerous, nuclear waste (some of it extremely long-lasting) near the shore of Lake Huron. We believe this project to be unwise in the extreme, with the strong probability of an outcome most dangerous to the health, safety, and environment of millions of people.

NCWC also agree with PCWO that the JRP’s advisory staff have raised very troubling issues re the long-term safety of the geology of the site, such as the evidence of a “previous breach in the Upper Ordovician rock facies by hot fluids, which they noted have moved through the area possibly along the as yet unmapped deep-rooted faults and fractures.” We are shocked that the proponent, and now the JRP, have ignored these staff views and many other warnings from independent scientists and the public, and accepted an “observational find out as you build” method which, if their deep geologic repository is approved by the Minister of Environment, means OPG will only learn more about this and other risks during and possibly long after it is built.

NCWC note with grave concern that this is a precedent-setting initiative, as there have been no successful deep-geologic sites for nuclear waste globally. The previous ‘first-of-a-kind’ in New Mexico has been closed due to a very serious accident caused by “human” error, something OPG, with the support of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC), cannot prove will not happen in this case.

NCWC would like to state unequivocally that we find this a non-precautionary and reckless proposal, and the JRP’s recommendation for its approval, completely unacceptable. NCWC strongly urge Minister Aglukkaq to reject this in the interest of the public health, safety, and environmental well-being of generations to come.

National Council of Women of Canada
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Founded in 1893, the National Council of Women of Canada is a non-profit and non-partisan organization of women, representing a large number of Canadians of diverse occupations, languages, origins and customs, and reflecting a cross-section of public opinion. NCWC is a non-governmental organization (NGO) composed of Local Councils, Study Groups, Provincial Councils, Nationally Organized Societies, and individuals. NCWC was incorporated in 1914 by an Act of Parliament, amended in 1946. NCWC has Consultative Status (General) with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) and is an Affiliate of the International Council of Women. We have been given ‘national historic significance’ status by the Government of Canada in recognition of the major contributions NCWC has made.