

## THE ST. CATHARINES AND DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WOMEN

February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015

### Transfer of HEU, highly enriched uranium, from Chalk River to Savannah Georgia

My name is Susan Pruyn. I am the President of the St. Catharines and District Council of Woman, a group comprised of 18 affiliated and 22 individual members. We have existed for 97 years with the mission "to empower all women to work towards improving the quality of life for women, families and society through a forum of member organizations and individuals".

What follows are some facts about HEU transfer followed by some questions.

-Patrick Robson, former Commissioner of Integrated Community Planning, said the Region will have to add the shipments to its' risk profile. And while he said federal agencies would have to take the lead if there's an emergency, *"depending, we may be the first on the scene."* ("Liquid nuclear waste could pass through Niagara" Jeff Bolichowski of the St. Catharines Standard on Nov. 6, 2013.)

-Joan Millard, head of decommissioning and waste management for Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd (AECL), has pledged to return U.S. origin HEU to lessen the risk of nuclear terrorism. The move, as well as reprocessing it is going to cost Canada \$60,000,000.00. Joan said *"No one has ever attempted to move a lethal brew containing an estimated 161 kilograms of HEU, containing 93 per cent uranium-235, the isotope that sustains a fission chain reaction. Also present are plutonium, tritium, other fission products and mercury."* ("AECL defends plans to transport liquid waste from Chalk River to South Carolina" Ian MacLeod of the Ottawa Citizen on Dec. 12, 2013.)

-The transfer has been delayed by 17 months. There is *"extended questioning about the design of the steel caskets. Nuclear activist are upset that regulators on both side (sic) of the border are not holding public environmental safety hearings."* ("U. S. delays moving armed convoys carrying nuclear waste through eastern Ontario", March 21, 2013 by Ian MacLeod.)

-New York Congressman, Brian Higgins, called on the Department of Energy to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) before the contentious shipments are allowed to proceed. ("High-Level Radioactive Waste Chalk River nuclear shipments opposed in Washington.)".

-In opposition to this transport a resolution was produced. It is available at [Http://ccnr.org/resolution-CRL-SRS-2013.pdf](http://ccnr.org/resolution-CRL-SRS-2013.pdf). There were just under 100 groups that signed onto this.

- over 300 Quebec Mayors have signed on to a resolution opposing the transport. (pers.com. Gracia Janes, PCWO VP Environment, from Dr. Gordon Edwards, Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility)

-On April 2, 2014 a letter was sent to Premier Kathleen Wynne from Mary Potter, our Provincial President, expressing grave concern on this issue. (copy attached)

-At the end of January 2015 the transport cask design was approved by the NRC, and US Lawyer Terry Lodge and several US groups and individuals along the proposed route are filing a law suit. (pers. Com. G Janes,)

Regrettably, there has already been a spill in the Niagara Region. Sulphuric acid spilled in the Town of Pelham in 1972. Seven years later Ray Haggerty, MPP for Niagara South said *“That was seven years ago and it’s still not settled. People have not been compensated for the damage to private land. The municipalities were compensated for the damage to roads, but the private landowners have never had a settlement.”* (Provincial Legislature Hansard, May 15, 1979 in a discussion about the environmental act.)

There are many questions the SCDCW has in relation to this issue:

- Who can guarantee the safety of the transfer of HEU from Chalk River to Savannah Georgia?
  - Will there be public forums so that the community can raise their concerns?
  - Why would this toxic liquid brew even be transported through our precious fruit lands, the highly populated GTA , and other rural or urban centres, when it could be solidified and stored as was planned before the US/Canada agreement was made
  - What is the safety plan if a spill occurs? This is the first time this has ever been considered; we are the guinea pigs.
  - Will the Region, being what Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission terms *“first responders”*, look more closely into who would be responsible in case of an accident, how fast could they react, and would our Great Lakes, rivers, streams, ground water, people, soils, fruit crops be at risk?
- To conclude, we would ask the Region to pass a resolution opposing the transport of this very dangerous liquid nuclear waste through urban and farm communities in Ontario and then circulate it to other municipalities , including local Niagara municipalities, for support.

***Susan Pruyn, President, St. Catharines and District Council of Woman***