

September 25, 2020

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
Parliament Buildings, Ottawa

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

The National Council of Women of Canada respectfully draws to your attention our concern that your government's support of private sector nuclear proposals for small modular reactors (SMRs), either through direct grants or provincial-federal joint funding, will have very negative impacts on Canada's natural resources along with public and worker health and safety, now and far into the future .

The NCWC agrees wholeheartedly with the September 21, 2020 letter from the cross-Canada community and Aboriginal women leaders in science, medicine, law and environmental protection to federal Treasury Board members in which they stated that Canada is failing to uphold its international legal obligations and UNDRIP principles regarding nuclear waste. Regardless of their size, these very dangerous small nuclear reactors will create long-lived hazardous waste while being planned mostly for *"northern remote and First Nation Communities in some of Canada's most fragile and globally significant communities"*.

Our NCWC policy and background research also supports the view that energy conservation and efficiencies, combined with alternative sources such as geothermal, wind, solar, water power, co-generation and reconfigured electricity grids could greatly reduce, and possibly supplant, most of Canada's mainly Ontario-based reliance on nuclear. Additionally, the planned decommissioning of Canada's ageing nuclear plants and inter-generational safe stewardship of all forms of nuclear waste, will create far more jobs than the continued operation of nuclear plants and their replacement by small modular nuclear reactors.

With this information in mind, It is of particular concern to NCWC that the government is rushing into supporting, and very possibly funding, this new venture and others such as two proposed 100 and 300 megawatt reactors in New Brunswick without yet finding safe low, intermediate and high level nuclear waste disposal sites. This is crucially important in the absence of a publicly acceptable Federal nuclear waste policy.

Finally, the National Council of Women of Canada asks you, our Prime Minister, to consider the following questions:

- Why is the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission facilitating, private sector SMR development and the Ministry of Natural Resources making it part of a SMR Action Plan whose Statement of Principles excludes those who don't agree to endorse the Ministry of Natural Resources with its commitment to *"support the*

development and deployment of various SMR technologies in Canada, with the first units in operation by the late 2020s?”

- How substantive are the private sector financial requests of the Government of Canada to help make small modular nuclear reactors economically viable?
- Will SMRs, which will take at least another ten to twenty years to become operational, help Canada meet its carbon reduction and climate change goals ?

To conclude, the National Council of Women of Canada urges you to cease funding of small modular nuclear reactors, and consider a pause to the current Ministry of Natural Resources SMR plans and process until there has been meaningful public and independent scientific, social, financial and practical input.

Sincerely,

Patricia Leson, President
National Council of Women of Canada

The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Canada is the traditional territory of First Nations and Metis People. We are grateful to join with others in peace and hope, advocating for an improved quality of life for women, children, families, and society.

*Test prepared by Gracia Janes, 1st Vice President NCWC

CC: Honourable Erin O'Tool, Conservative Party of Canada
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