



2023 September 11

Record Number: 318658460-14073

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson
 Minister for Energy and Natural Resources
 580 Booth Street, 21st Floor
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0E4
 Canada

Re: Support for the Integrated Strategy for Radioactive Waste and its Recommendations

Dear Minister Wilkinson,

I am pleased to provide you views from Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) in response to Natural Resources Canada's request in relation to the recommendations made by the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) to develop an Integrated Strategy for Radioactive Waste in Canada.

As you are aware, AECL is responsible for managing the Government of Canada's radioactive waste and decommissioning liabilities. AECL's inventory includes waste on our sites *inter alia* at Chalk River in Ontario and Whiteshell Laboratories in Manitoba created by nuclear fuel fabrication, nuclear reactor development, medical radioisotope development and production and other research and development activities. It also includes contaminated soil and debris from the decommissioning of obsolete structures at our sites. AECL's mandate includes the ongoing management of radioactive waste in a manner that is safe and environmentally responsible. It also extends to the cleanup of waste generated by other entities for which the Government of Canada assigned responsibility to AECL, including the historic cleanup activities in Port Hope, Ontario, and the historic wastes in the northern transportation route along the border of Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

Regarding the recommendations made by the NWMO in June 2023 pertaining to an Integrated Strategy for Radioactive Waste in Canada, I am pleased to make the following observations in support of the approach:

- AECL, like other major waste owners, other organizations and interested First Nations within Canada, fully participated in the process used by the NWMO to develop this strategy. In AECL's view, the approach used was inclusive and the NWMO was open and transparent with what it heard and learned.
- AECL fully supports the specific recommendations put forward by the NWMO to NRCAN regarding the different approaches for low-level waste, intermediate-level waste (ILW) and non-fuel high-level waste (HLW).
- AECL also supports the four implementing principles included as part of the strategy.
- AECL, with our contractor – Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL), has already carried out studies to develop concepts for disposal of ILW and non-fuel HLW and is willing to discuss how this work could be utilised for the benefit of the wider industry.

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Should you accept the recommendations, you can be assured that AECL will work with other waste generators and waste owners to collaborate and to move forward these recommendations as per the obligations on waste generators and waste owners in full alignment with the Government of Canada's Policy for Radioactive Waste Management and Decommissioning.

Looking to the future, AECL specifically recognizes the forward-looking commitment that we must engage in consent-seeking processes with local communities and Indigenous Peoples for siting of future final disposal projects. In addition, AECL will continue to work to discharge its obligations as a waste owner while taking fiscally responsible decisions and being accountable to Canadians, as a federal Crown corporation, for strong program and fiscal performance. Overall, success will require significant coordination between and action from Natural Resources Canada and AECL, and we stand ready to work productively with our portfolio partner.

In conclusion, the recommendations along with your government's support, would achieve the goal of providing long-term solutions for all radioactive waste in Canada, which is essential in earning public trust as we embark on ambitious nuclear plans to contribute to Canada's net zero future by 2050. We look forward to working with the NWMO, collaborating across industry and building on this good work in an open and transparent manner with continued engagement with Indigenous peoples, provinces, territories and interested communities.

Yours truly,

2023-09-12

X 

Signed by: Fred Dermarkar

Fred Dermarkar
President and Chief Executive Officer

Cc:

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