



Canadian Nuclear Association



Speaking Notes

For

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Director, Regulatory Affairs

Canadian Nuclear Association

at

CNSC Public Hearing:

Application by Atomic Energy of Canada Limited

for a Waste Nuclear Substance Licence for the

Port Granby Long-term Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Project

Courtice, Ontario

September 27, 2011

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Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, Commission members, and members of the community.

I am here today to speak on behalf of the 71,000 people who work in Canada's nuclear industry. Everyone who works in our industry – be they managers, scientists, technicians, or construction workers – not only work in the communities that are home to our industry, but live there, too. Ensuring the health and safety of our communities, of all Canadians, and the environment, is therefore our first, and most important, priority.

For this reason, the CNA and all of its Members support AECL's application for a ten-year Waste Nuclear Substance Licence for the Port Granby Long-Term Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Project. We believe that granting this Licence is in the best interest of the Port Granby community and in the best interest of all Canadians.

Please allow us to elaborate on why we support the granting of this licence.

The Canadian nuclear industry's commitment to public safety and environmental stewardship includes the safe storage of low-level radioactive waste generated over the course of the nuclear fuel cycle. Currently, low-level radioactive waste material is being stored in a safe and stable condition at the Port Granby Waste Management Facility.

However, there is an undisputed need for a solution that will ensure the safe management of the material in the long term.

This was recognized as early as 1980, when the Atomic Energy Control Board, the predecessor of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, issued a decommissioning order for the Port Granby Waste Management Facility.

The approximately 430,000 cubic meters of low-level radioactive waste are located in a series of trenches and ravines along the Lake Ontario shoreline. However, the shoreline is slowly eroding, which means that leaving this material at its current location is clearly not an option in the long-term.

Protecting the health and safety of Canadians, and ensuring the continued protection of our environment, requires that the low-level radioactive waste be moved from its current location to a facility that will ensure its safe and stable storage for the long-term.

While the purpose of this project is to protect the health and safety of Canadians, and to protect the environment, the project also has a number of socio-economic benefits for the region.

For example, over the five-year construction period, AECL will spend over \$42 million dollars – or \$8.4 million per year. Some of this money will be used to pay employees, who in turn will spend some of their income on local goods and services and create additional business activity. During the peak of the construction period, the project will create at least 29 new jobs.

However, once the facility is set up, there will be a small staff of highly skilled employees in charge of maintaining the facility in a safe and stable condition.

These numbers are not on par with other major infrastructure projects, but let me remind you that this is not a make-work project. While economic benefits are certainly important, they are not the driving factor. The primary purpose of the project is to ensure that the health and safety of Canadians and their environment are protected in the long-term.

That said, the Canadian nuclear industry plays an important, positive role in Canada's economy and society.

The Canadian nuclear industry is a \$6.6 billion per year industry. It contributes \$1.5 billion in annual tax revenues, and creates \$1.2 billion in export revenues.

We see ourselves as an integral part of the communities that host our operations, because we work and live in these communities. For this reason, we do not try to impose solutions, but instead work with our neighbors to find solutions that meet the needs of everyone.

We therefore want to draw your attention to the fact that the design concept of the Port Granby Project was proposed by the local community.

The Municipality of Clarington offered to host this project. Community members contributed to the development of the conceptual design, and only recently were consulted on the development of the proposed end-use of the Waste Management Facility.

While the need for the Port Granby Project cannot be denied - a long-term solution needs to be found one way or another - the fact that the local community contributed to the development of the current design of the project, is a testament to how the nuclear industry works to engage our host communities in discussions on our operations.

But while local support is clearly vital to the success of this project, what about the ability of AECL to implement and manage it in the long-term?

AECL's record speaks for itself, and clearly shows that it is more than capable of living up to the demands of this important task.

In 1992, AECL cleaned up about 42,500 cubic meters of low-level radioactive waste from several sites in Fort McMurray, Alberta. In 1995, AECL removed approximately 9,000 cubic meters of waste from about 60 residential properties in Scarborough, Ontario. In 2000, AECL cleaned up about 5,000 cubic meters of waste in Surrey, British Columbia. And more recently, AECL removed 867 cubic meters of waste from Tulita, Northwest Territories.

AECL has more than thirty years experience in successfully removing and managing low-level radioactive waste and is therefore uniquely qualified to carry out this work. Not only has AECL been entrusted to carry out such work in the past, they were also recently issued a licence for the cleanup of about 1.2 million cubic meters of low-level radioactive waste in the neighbouring Municipality of Port Hope.

The need for the Port Granby Project, the local involvement in this project, and the unique ability of AECL to successfully implement and manage this project should be sufficient reason to grant AECL a ten-year Waste Nuclear Substance Licence for the Port Granby Long-Term Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Project.

At this time we would be pleased to answer any questions.

Thank you.