



KEBAOWEK FIRST NATION
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August 3, 2023

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Office of the Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Subject: Urgent appeal to abandon the proposed installation of a Near Surface Disposal Facility on the Chalk River Laboratories site

Dear Prime Minister,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and spirits. We are writing to bring to your attention a matter of deep concern that demands serious consideration and immediate action from the Government of Canada.

I am writing to inform you that Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) is inching closer to licensing the permanent "NSDF" Near Surface Disposal Facility for nuclear waste at Chalk River, Ontario. Radioactive waste stored less than 1km from the Kichi Sibi-Ottawa River is a risk we collectively cannot afford. The Kichi Sibi holds immense spiritual and cultural significance for our communities and is at the heart of their ancestral land. The fact that the project has progressed despite its blatant disregard for the fundamental Indigenous right of free, prior, and informed consent, as confirmed both by Canadian and international laws, further exacerbates the issue.

Last week, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), adopted a resolution emphasizing the urgent need for a meeting between the AFN and the Government of Canada regarding the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission's (CNSC) consultation policy concerning the decision on the transportation and treatment of nuclear waste. The resolution, authored by Chief Lance Haymond of Kebaowek First Nation, further urged the continuation of collaborative efforts with regions and Natural Resources Canada to formulate a coordinated response to the new policy on radioactive waste and decommissioning.

The primary objective of the resolution is to ensure a strategic approach and mitigation measures for First Nations, and to ensure the full compliance of the policy on radioactive waste with international human rights laws and to promote the implementation as highlighted in Article 29 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has announced that **a final licensing hearing for the NSDF will take place on August 10, 2023**. The staff of the CNSC is recommending approval of the license. In the days ahead, we are hopeful that the Government of Canada will support us in speaking out against this development.



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It is our firm position that the CNSC should not consider a permanent near surface disposal facility this close to the Ottawa River. The proponent's studies show that the facility would leak during operation and after closure. Experts say the project fails to comply with International Safety Standards and that approval of the facility would place Canada in contravention of its international treaty obligations.

The opposition to this project is not limited to the Indigenous communities. In fact, over 140 municipalities in Quebec and Ontario including Gatineau and Montreal, as well as several civil society organizations, have expressed their concerns, with the City of Ottawa voicing its discomfort in a resolution adopted in 2021.

By heeding the concerns of the affected communities, the Government of Canada can demonstrate a genuine commitment to reconciliation and uphold its international obligations under UNDRIP. I am confident that your leadership in addressing this matter will be critical in forging a path of harmony, sustainability, and social justice for all.

Meegwetch for your consideration of this important request and we look forward to a timely response.

I am hopeful that your government will act responsibly and ethically in the best interest of the Indigenous peoples, the environment, and the Canadian society as a whole.

Sincerely,

Chief Lance Haymond
[Kebaowek First Nation](#)

Cc: [The Honourable Gary Anandasangaree](#)
Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations

Cc: [The Honourable Steven Guilbeault](#)
Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Cc: [The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson](#)
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

Cc: [The Honorable Patty Hajdu](#)
Minister of Indigenous Services