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**NUCLEAR DISPOSAL ON THE CHALK RIVER LABORATORIES SITE: THE ASSEMBLY
OF FIRST NATIONS CALLS FOR URGENT MEETING WITH THE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT**

KEBAOWEK, July 20, 2023 — Last week, at the General Assembly of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), a resolution was adopted regarding the proposed project of a Near Surface Disposal Facility (NSDF) on the Chalk River Laboratories site, calling for “an urgent meeting between the AFN and the Government of Canada regarding the consultation policy of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) as it relates to nuclear waste transport and disposal decision”.

This resolution, sponsored by Kebaowek First Nation Chief Lance Haymond, also instructs the AFN to “continue working with the Regions and Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) to develop a coordinated response to the new radioactive waste and decommissioning policy to include First Nations strategies and mitigation measures to fully conform with and promote the implementation of international human rights laws and standards”. It also reiterates Canada’s obligations under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), specifically Article 29 which declares that “States shall take effective measures to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous materials shall take place in the lands or territories of Indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent”.

Chief Haymond is thankful for the support of his colleagues across Canada and hopes that this resolution will help him convince the federal government to abandon the current plans for the establishment of this massive aboveground radioactive waste dump on unceded Algonquin territory near the Kichi Sibi (Ottawa River in Anishinabe).

“The Kichi Sibi is sacred to our Peoples and is at the heart of our unceded ancestral land. Moreover, the project in question is being develop without respecting a fundamental right of ours, which is to give our free, prior, and informed consent, a right confirmed by both Canadian and international laws”, declared Chief Haymond.

Audition at the CNSC on August 10th

The Chiefs of Kebaowek and Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nations will present their [Indigenous-led assessment](#) of the radioactive waste proposal and its impact on their culture, land, water and wildlife at a CNSC public hearing on August 10th, even if this Commission has failed to fulfill its duty to consult.

The First Nations will express their opinion regarding the infringement of their rights, including the violation of the UNDRIP, and will express their concerns regarding the proposed project’s negative impacts on the environment as a whole.

“I would like to be very clear: the Algonquin Peoples did not consent to the construction of this radioactive waste dump on our unceded territory. We believe that consultation has been inadequate, to say the least, and that our Indigenous rights are being threatened by this proposal. We are calling for the NSDF project to be canceled. The focus must shift towards a true and successful cleanup of the site to permanently eliminate legacy waste”, explains Chief Haymond.

For more information, please visit [Kebaowek First Nation](#)

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Source:

Kebaowek First Nation

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The final written submissions from Kebaowek First Nation and Kitigan Zibi outline serious concerns about the effects that the radioactive waste dump will have on Kichi Sibi (the Ottawa River), future generations, and Indigenous rights.

Meaningful consultation with the Algonquin First Nations has been lacking since the environmental assessment for the project was first announced in 2016.

The NSDF [would leak radioactive and hazardous materials](#) into a nearby wetland and into the Ottawa River during operation and after closure. It is expected to eventually disintegrate through [a process of “normal evolution.”](#) It could also contaminate the river through the effects of earthquakes, wildfires, flooding, and extreme weather events. Not only is the Kichi Sibi sacred to the Algonquin peoples, but the Chalk River site is also near Algonquin sacred sites at Oiseau Rock and Pointe au Baptême.

In 2017 the [Assembly of First Nations](#) adopted a resolution stating that the CNSC and the Canadian government had failed to uphold their constitutional duty to consult and accommodate First Nations with respect to the NSDF. The Anishinabek Nation and Iroquois Caucus made a Radioactive Waste [Joint Declaration](#) stating that “we need to protect the lands, waters and all living things for future generations” and calling for no abandonment of radioactive wastes, by keeping them away from major bodies of water and eliminating the practice of importing or exporting radioactive waste.

In addition to the Algonquin First Nations' opposition to the project, [more than 140 Quebec and Ontario municipalities](#), including Gatineau and Montreal, as well as several other civil societies, voiced their opposition to the NSDF plan, with the City of Ottawa passing a resolution of concern in 2021.

Kebaowek and Kitigan Zibi's Indigenous NSDF Assessment and Final Submission can be found here: <http://www.kebaowek.ca/NSDF.html>