

Agenda Item 4: Six mandated areas – Environment

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE ANISHINABEK NATION

Good Afternoon, my name is Sylvia Plain, I am here to represent the Anishinabek Nation, a political organization made up of Ojibwe, Potawatomi and Odawa Nations, also known as the Three Fires Confederacy. The Anishinabek Nation represents 33 communities in the Province of Ontario with a population of approximately 60,000 citizens, the Anishinabek Nation however, is not limited to a singular province; the Anishinabek Territories span over many provinces and states in both Canada and the United States. Along with the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Anishinabe peoples are the original guardians of the Great Lakes; the largest body of freshwater on the Earth.

Today, I am here to raise awareness and to two pending projects in our territories that will forever harm the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River Basin; a drinking source for approximately 40 million people in Canada and the United States, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. In addition to the other life forms and ecosystems that are sustained by those waters.

Firstly, Ontario Power Generation plans to build a Deep Geological Repository on the shores of Lake Huron by 2026. If this project were to move forward, an estimated 52 million tons of nuclear waste will be shipped to the site from other nuclear plants around Canada and buried at a depth deeper than the lake itself. In addition to this, the waste will remain toxic for more than 100,000 years.

Secondly, the Canadian Nuclear Laboratories have proposed to build a five-storey-high mound to store nuclear waste beside the Ottawa River. In addition to this, the Canadian Nuclear Laboratories also plans to transport highly radioactive liquid material from Chalk River to South Carolina.

While both Ontario Power Generation and the Canadian Nuclear Laboratories have assured the public that their justification to bury nuclear waste in both of these locations is backed by scientific research, we have been shown by the three other nuclear waste dump sites in the entire world, one in New Mexico and two in Germany, that after only 15 years of operation, the containers that held the nuclear waste exploded, proving that nuclear dump sites have a 100% failure rate.

As one of the original and current guardians of the Great Lakes Basin, the Anishinabek Nation stands in opposition of the transportation and abandonment of radioactive waste in our territories, as we maintain our jurisdiction over the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River Basin as a result of Aboriginal titles, and the treaties that have been entered into by First Nations and the Crown.

At this time we ask the Permanent Forum to put pressure on the Government of Canada, particularly the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna to stop the transportation and abandonment of radioactive waste, as there was no Free, Prior and Informed Consent given by the Indigenous Nations to the Government of Canada when these projects were first being proposed, nor do these project align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals or the Paris Agreement.

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