

MEDIA RELEASE

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Deep Flaws Noted as Federal Impact Assessment for NWMO's Deep Geological Repository Project Begins

IGNACE – A federal review of one of the largest projects in Canadian history [commenced on January 5th](#), and the public has just 30 days to complete an initial review. The comment period on the Nuclear Waste Management Organization's description of their project was announced on the federal Impact Assessment Agency's [website](#) on Monday afternoon, launching the [30-day public comment period](#) which will close on February 4th.

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization's plan to transport, process and bury all of Canada's nuclear fuel waste at a site between Ignace and Dryden in northwestern Ontario will include 50 years of transporting highly radioactive waste and 160 years of operation, and will leave in place 150,000 tonnes of the radioactive waste underground in the headwaters of the Wabigoon and Turtle-Rainy River watersheds.

The [1,233-page document](#), and a [92-page summary](#), are available on the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada's website.

*We the Nuclear Free North (WTNFn) has noted fundamental flaws in the Nuclear Waste Management Organization's (NWMO's) *Initial Project Description* for its planned deep geological repository for all of Canada's nuclear fuel waste.*

A key concern is that the NWMO has omitted the long-distance transportation of the waste from its project description, despite the *Impact Assessment Act*'s requirement that activities integral to a project be included in its assessment.

"There's no nuclear waste burial project if there's no nuclear waste transported," said Brennain Lloyd, Project Coordinator for Northwatch. "Transportation is part and parcel of the project – the NWMO has represented it that way for two decades. Transportation must be assessed as part of this project review."

"The NWMO's *Initial Project Description* document deals rather lightly with the project, despite its length," commented Wendy O'Connor, a volunteer with Nuclear Free Thunder Bay and We the Nuclear Free North. "I expected to see greater detail on the project's safety case, and more information about the waste repackaging facility that will be on the surface releasing radioactive contaminants to water, land and air. I rely on the Impact Assessment Agency to demand more detail on these from the NWMO, and my comments will reflect that."

We the Nuclear Free North encourages groups and individuals to view the [Initial Project Description](#) or its [summary](#) and provide comments to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada by February 4th. The alliance will be releasing more analysis in the coming weeks, and will hold a public webinar on January 12th to support public participation.

“Public participation is essential”, commented Mary Veltri, a board member with Environment North. “This is the first in a series of stages for the federal review, and it is absolutely vital that the public engage. We recognize that the circumstances make it challenging, but given the high level of concern about this project we believe the public will rise to that challenge.”

“We also believe it is imperative for the City of Thunder Bay to be actively participating in the Impact Assessment process to ensure that the concerns of our residents are adequately addressed. In particular, we would expect our City Council and administration to support our position that the scope of the regulatory review must encompass the risks associated with transportation along the whole transportation route.”

[Additional action tools and supporting information](#) including links to [register](#) for We the Nuclear Free North's January 12th webinar and to the Impact Assessment Agency's project page and documents on the Impact Assessment Agency's public registry are available on WTNF's webpage: www.wethenuclearfreenorth.ca/impacts/

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