

The [Nuclear Waste Management Organization](#) (NWMO) is comprised of Ontario Power Generation, Hydro Quebec and New Brunswick Power, mandated under the [Nuclear Fuel Waste Act](#) (2002) to investigate and recommend a long-term management option for all of Canada's high-level nuclear fuel waste. In 2007, the federal government accepted the NWMO's "[Adaptive Phased Management](#)" approach, which included a site selection process to locate a deep geological repository for the radioactive waste, and development of the repository and associated operations. NWMO launched their siting process in 2010. Twenty-two municipalities were the subject of NWMO investigations. A site was selected in 2024.

NWMO'S SITE SELECTION PROCESS

Throughout its siting process the NWMO repeatedly declared that it would not select a site without an "informed and willing community" which had made a "compelling demonstration of willingness". The Township of Ignace was deemed "willing" by the NWMO based on an online poll that asked residents if they supported continuing in the NWMO process. The poll did not ask if respondents supported the NWMO project.

In October 2024, Grand Council Treaty #3 chiefs unanimously passed a [resolution](#) opposing the DGR in Treaty #3 territory. On November 18th, 2024, Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation announced that they accepted further site studies being done but that they had not consented to the project.

Ten days later the NWMO [announced](#) their selection of the Revell site in the heart of Treaty #3 territory in northwestern Ontario, in the headwaters of the Wabigoon watershed, as their intended site. In December 2024, Eagle Lake First Nation [announced](#) legal action against the NWMO selection of the Revell site.

NWMO'S DEEP GEOLOGICAL REPOSITORY PROJECT

The NWMO proposal is still in the concept stage. Despite this, the project has moved forward to a federal impact assessment, with the Notice of Commencement issued on July 3, 2026. However, the federal government announced in June that it is considering deeming NWMO's DGR to be a "Project of National Interest" (a PONI) which would guarantee approval and bypass the full impact assessment process.

NWMO's project includes processing the high-level waste at the repository site, using a series of hot cells to transfer the wastes into steel containers with a very thin copper coating. The "used fuel packaging plant" will generate low-level, and intermediate-level and liquid radioactive waste, and will release radio-contaminants to the air and to surface water.

The used fuel containers will be placed deep underground in "placement" rooms using robotic equipment, as the levels of radioactivity will be too high for human workers. The blasting of rock to create placement rooms will occur concurrent to other rooms being filled and sealed. After the placement rooms are sealed, there will be no monitoring of the waste containers and no means to detect or respond to the expected failure. Eventually the containers will fail, and the contents will be released to groundwater and then to the surface.



There is [no deep geological repository](#) for high-level nuclear waste operating anywhere in the world, despite decades of effort by the nuclear industry. In some countries, repositories have been proposed then cancelled, and others have been proposed and are under review (the proposed repository in Sweden has been in the regulatory process since 2011) but none has received final approval or been brought into operation.