

ADVISORY COUNCIL TO THE NWMO
c/o NWMO, 22 St. Clair Avenue East, 4th Floor
Toronto, ON M4T 2S3

The Honourable Tim Hodgson, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Canada
580 Booth Street, 21st Floor, Room: C7-1
Ottawa, ON K1A 0E4

June 27th, 2025

Dear Minister Hodgson,

Congratulations on your recent election, and your appointment as the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Canada.

I am writing you as Chair of the Advisory Council of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO), the advisory body mandated under the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act to examine and comment on the NWMO's activities. This letter provides a brief report on our activities in 2024 and some reflections on various policy objectives your government has outlined. We would like to underscore that this is a generational project for the country, and it is crucial for the government to work with the NWMO to identify a regulatory approvals process for this project that is clear, timely and predictable.

In 2024, the NWMO achieved a major milestone: the selection of a site for Canada's first Deep Geological Repository for used nuclear fuel. Members of the Advisory Council met with the NWMO throughout the year and were briefed on the Organization's progress towards this goal. The Advisory Council also offered its advice and guidance as the selection of a site was made.

In addition, last year Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and the Township of Ignace designed and implemented their own respective processes to determine their community willingness to host Canada's deep geologic repository for used nuclear fuel. The result was a strong community endorsement of willingness from both communities to move to the next phase of the site selection process to host a deep geologic repository to safely contain and isolate Canada's used nuclear fuel for the long term.

In the light of this, the Advisory Council believes that Canada's plan for the safe and long-term management of used nuclear fuel is on track as the NWMO prepares to enter the federal regulatory process.

Your government is committed to simplifying regulatory reviews for priority projects, ensuring that final decisions on projects are made expeditiously and that projects move forward on the basis of "one project, one review". These are critical regulatory ambitions that will help to ensure Canada can get major projects built.

The NWMO deep geological repository has been a priority project for Canada since 2002, when it was mandated by Parliament with the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act. In the intervening years, through rigorous technical and social activities, the NWMO has succeeded in identifying willing host communities for the repository.

The project is at a critical moment in its history. As it prepares to enter the regulatory process, we urge the government to work with the NWMO to identify the most constructive regulatory path forward to move the project to approval.

This includes clarifying the respective roles of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, as well as clarifying the meaning and practical bearing of Free, Prior and Informed Consent so that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples can be put into practice in a way that brings regulatory clarity for Indigenous Peoples, the Crown and project proponents.

On this latter point, we draw your attention to the NWMO's commitment to engage in an Indigenous-led Regulatory Assessment and Approval Process, that is, a sovereign regulatory process that will be developed and implemented by Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation. This approach not only acknowledges reconciliation in a meaningful way, but over time it can build deep roots with a critical host community that the Organization will be working with for generations to come.

In closing, we would like to recognize the steadfast leadership of the elected representatives and the responsible, thoughtful participation of community members in Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and the Township of Ignace. We look forward as the NWMO opens a new chapter and moves a big step closer to delivering on its critical mandate for Canada.

Sincerely, on behalf of the members of the Advisory Council,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Cameron". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David R. Cameron
Chair, Advisory Council to the NWMO