



Member of Parliament
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The Proposed Near Surface Disposal Facility at Chalk River Laboratories

Protecting human health, the Ottawa River, and future generations must always come first. Communities deserve transparency, respect, and a meaningful voice in decisions that affect their land, water, and safety, particularly when it comes to nuclear waste.

Concerns about the proposed Near Surface Disposal Facility at Chalk River Laboratories are entirely legitimate. No community wants nuclear waste stored near a major river like the Ottawa River. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge a difficult reality: the waste in question already exists and is currently located at the Chalk River site, on the riverbank, as part of a decommissioned nuclear facility. The challenge before us is therefore not whether this waste should be there – it already is – but how it can be removed from the riverbank and stored safely, securely, and under the strictest possible oversight.



Last winter, in my role on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, I expressed my support for the informed position and recommendations of the Ottawa River Keepers. I highlighted the importance of addressing historical waste present at the Chalk River site while protecting human and ecological health, and I stressed the need for implementing a robust process of ongoing monitoring to address community concerns.

Within the current legislative framework governing the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) decision, I have advocated for improvements on behalf of our community, particularly in the following areas:

1. Lack of consultation on

alternatives: A major procedural concern with the current CNSC process is that it was limited to assessing and consulting on a single option presented by project proponents. It fails to recognize the importance of exploring various alternatives and conducting thorough consultations with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. The voices of affected communities must be at the forefront of these discussions, not on the periphery.

2. Modernization of the law to align

with UNDRIP: The government, particularly the Minister of Natural Resources, should modernize the Nuclear Safety and Control Act. This modernization should align with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UNDRIPA), thereby progressively reflecting longstanding demands of First Nations.

3. Community monitoring: Members of our community, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, should play an active role in monitoring the waste management facility near the surface and Chalk River laboratories, ensuring adherence to the strictest standards in monitoring, transparency, reporting, safeguards, control, and rule compliance.

4. Role of government and private

sector: The private sector should not lead in nuclear waste management. This approach was initiated by former Prime Minister Stephen Harper's decision to privatize part of the nuclear waste management. In her view, this was a misguided decision, and she is committed to advocating for its reversal. While profit-seeking may be the primary goal of private companies, it is the government's duty to make all key decisions regarding public safety. While the private sector can be a valuable collaborator, it is imperative that the government take the lead on health and safety issues significant issues such as nuclear waste management and protecting our communities.



Additional information and context on my position are available through my submission and intervention before the Commission and through coverage in the National Observer.

I remain committed to engaging with residents, Indigenous partners, environmental organizations, and experts to ensure that decisions related to nuclear waste management prioritize safety, accountability, and long-term environmental protection.

Ongoing dialogue and community oversight are essential to getting this right.



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