



The Joint Chiefs and Councils
of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation

Statement to Members | NWMO selects Wabigoon Site for DGR

Date: November 28, 2024

For Immediate Release

Today the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (“NWMO”) announced that it has selected Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and the Township of Ignace as the host communities for Canada’s future deep geological repository for used nuclear fuel (the “DGR”) site.

The decision is an historic victory for SON, its People, and our rights of self-determination. Our People and leaders have fought for decades for the right of free, prior, and informed consent to be recognized and upheld with respect to the disposal of radioactive waste. It is as a result of these efforts that consent was required as part of NWMO’s site selection process. Our voices have been heard and respected – there will be no DGR in SON Territory without our consent.

Our work, however, is not done. The reality is that SON’s nuclear waste problems, including the current and growing storage of 45% of Canada’s used nuclear fuel waste, remain unresolved. NWMO’s current plan is to keep the used fuel waste in SON Territory for generations to come while it attempts to build a site in the North. NWMO and the rest of the nuclear industry have failed to recognize that this continued exploitation of SON Territory is unacceptable and will not stand.

SON leadership has been working with NWMO for years to make sure that our right to decide is respected and that fair agreements would be in place to protect our interests regardless of what our members ultimately decided. We have always engaged with NWMO in good faith. Unfortunately, the manner in which NWMO has made its own decisions is extremely disappointing. NWMO made many commitments to work with us collaboratively to support our decision-making process in a full and respectful way. But it is clear NWMO continues to act unilaterally – making decisions behind closed doors and without regard for our governance process or good-faith partnership.

SON leadership, guided by membership, will continue to move ahead with industry and government in a principled way, based on our inherent right to make decisions that are best for our Territory, future generations, and way of life. We will continue to work with all of our members through our membership engagement sessions so that we can build our own vision for how to resolve the many challenges caused by the nuclear industry and what future projects and plans we might support and which we cannot. We now have the breathing room to make decisions that are best for our Territory and our future. And we



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will not accept any more project proposals pushed on us from industry until we have had the time to make our own decisions about the best path forward.

We will also continue to work with NWMO to bring them to the table in a respectful and honourable way, to deal with the many unanswered questions about the DGR – including questions regarding the ongoing storage of used fuel waste, transportation issues, and what happens if the DGR never gets built in the North? And we will work with NWMO and other industry players to resolve the other nuclear waste issues facing our People, including the continued exploitation of SON Territory for the storage of nuclear waste from all of Ontario.

We face many challenges because of the long and shameful history of the nuclear industry in our Territory, and these challenges continue to grow with plans for more and more nuclear. Through the strength and perseverance of our People, however, we have changed the way decisions are made in SON Territory. Gone are the days when governments and industry would make all the decisions. Today represents a new reality – only the SON People can make major decisions that stand to impact our Rights, Territory and way of life.

Miigwetch,

Ogimaa Gregory Nadjiwon

Chippewas of Nawash First Nation

Ogimaa Conrad Ritchie

Chippewas of Saugeen First Nation