



NUCLEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION DES DÉCHETS NUCLÉAIRES

March 13, 2026

APM-CORR-00650-302968

Chief and Council
Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation

CC:

Terry Allan, Chief <contact information removed>

Finn MacDonald, Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (nuclearwaste-dechetsnucleaires@iaac-aeic.gc.ca)

RE: Response to Correspondence Regarding the Deep Geological Repository (DGR) for Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel Project

Dear Chief and Members of Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation,

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) thanks Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation for its submission regarding the Initial Project Description (IPD) for the proposed Deep Geological Repository (DGR) for Canada's used nuclear fuel Project (Project). We appreciate the opportunity to respond directly.

In this letter, we seek to address the key issues in your submission identifying Project issues and concerns across the broader region.

Scope of Impact Assessment process

On January 5, 2026, the NWMO IPD was posted on the IAAC registry. Submitting the IPD formally initiates the rigorous integrated IA and nuclear licensing regulatory process for the Project. The IPD also supports IAAC in identifying potentially affected Indigenous communities, informing engagement planning, and establishing the scope of the assessment. There will be numerous opportunities for engagement before a decision is made about the Project. As reflected in the IPD, the Project has been assessed at a screening level, and the risk of residual adverse effects is anticipated to be low with effects primarily associated with localized Project activities.

After receiving NWMO's IPD, as required by the Impact Assessment Act (IAA), IAAC prepared the Summary of Issues, which the NWMO received on Monday, February 16, 2026. The Summary of Issues outlines the key issues for the federal integrated IA process raised by the public and Indigenous communities during the 30-day comment period on the IPD.

The integrated process follows strict requirements and will include the identification and assessment of potential pathways of interaction and will consider how the Project as described in the Initial Project Description could affect, among other things, the environment, human health, and Indigenous rights before the Project can be approved. As part of this process, the IAAC and the CNSC will develop the requirements for the integrated assessment, requiring the NWMO to engage with the potentially affected Indigenous communities specified by the IAAC and the CNSC.

Waters and Lands

We understand that you raised issues regarding the potential impacts from the Project to waters and lands. The Project is anticipated to pose a low risk of residual adverse effects to surface water, groundwater, and other environmental components that support downstream land and resource use with the application of established design features and mitigation measures. The Project will involve localized land disturbance at the Project site associated with construction, operations, safety, and security requirements. Based on extensive studies completed to date, no contamination of land or water is anticipated that would affect the safe use of waters for drinking, fishing, or other land-based practices. The screening-level residual effects risk assessment is presented in Section 19 of the IPD.

At this stage, NWMO has confidence in the safety of the Project and its ability to protect people and the environment. Now that the Project has entered the integrated Impact Assessment and nuclear licensing process, this confidence will be confirmed through comprehensive safety and environmental assessments completed under the rigorous and transparent oversight of IAAC and the CNSC. These processes require extensive baseline data, detailed technical studies, and provide opportunities for Indigenous communities and the public to participate and be heard.

As the impact assessment process progresses, the NWMO remains committed to understanding how Indigenous communities wish to be involved, how the Project may potentially affect them, and how Indigenous perspectives can be considered in the assessment of effects, mitigation measures, and follow-up and monitoring programs.

Next Steps

The NWMO appreciates the opportunity to respond to your community's views and welcomes the opportunity to meet with Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation to better understand how the Project may potentially affect your community. Please contact Joe Gaboury, Director, Indigenous Engagement, by email at <contact information removed> or by phone at <contact information removed> at your convenience if you are interested in meeting in this regard.

In the meantime, for additional information regarding the Project, we refer you to the NWMO's response to the Summary of Issues provided by IAAC based on the IPD. The NWMO's response is available on the IAAC's registry website for this Project at: <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/88774>.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss next steps at your convenience.

Sincerely,

<Original signed by>

Jessica Perritt

Director, Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation

<contact information removed>