



NUCLEAR WASTE
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION
DES DÉCHETS
NUCLÉAIRES

March 13, 2026

APM-CORR-00650-302971

Chief and Council
Asubpeeschoseewagong Anishinabek
(Grassy Narrows First Nation)

CC:

Joseph Forbister, Director of the Land Protection Team <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 Council,

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) thanks Grassy Narrows First Nation (Grassy Narrows) for its submission to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) regarding the Initial Project Description (IPD) for the proposed Deep Geological Repository (DGR) for Canada's used nuclear fuel Project (Project). We acknowledge the care and consideration reflected in your review and 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.

Engagement

Grassy Narrows has raised issues regarding the engagement related to the Project. NWMO's work has been informed by decades of engagement with Indigenous communities undertaken from the outset of the Adaptive Phased Management approach, including during the identification and evaluation of potential locations to site the Project.

With the submission of the IPD, the Project is now in the integrated Impact Assessment and nuclear licensing regulatory process, which represents a new phase for the Project. The IPD is the first regulatory submission and does not represent an approval decision. The integrated Impact Assessment process includes numerous opportunities for potentially affected Indigenous communities to engage on defining issues, pathways of effects, study requirements, and mitigation and follow-up measures. The NWMO remains committed to respectful engagement on Indigenous rights and interests as part of the integrated Impact Assessment and associated licensing process.

Social and Environmental Impacts

We understand that you have raised questions about the potential cumulative, environmental and social impacts of the Project. Addressing the long-term responsibility associated with used nuclear fuel is the purpose of the Project, which is intended to safely contain and isolate used nuclear fuel using multiple engineered and natural barriers. The Project represents a responsible step toward ensuring the long-term health, safety, and sustainability of Canada's environment and communities by providing a safe and permanent solution for Canada's used nuclear fuel. Canadians have been clear that this issue should be addressed now, rather than deferred to future generations.

Evidence to date indicates the Project will result in low risk of impacts and negligible cumulative effects, with further assessments and strict regulation ensuring safety at every stage. The Project is anticipated to pose a low risk of residual adverse effects to air quality, 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, but this disturbance is not expected to have broader regional effects. More specifically, based on extensive studies completed to date, no contamination of air, 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.

The NWMO recognizes the need to contain and safely manage used nuclear fuel over very long timeframes. It is precisely because of this that the Project is needed. We have confidence that the Project is safe at this stage of the regulatory process based on studies completed to date and summarized in the IPD. Additional safety and environmental assessments will be undertaken throughout the Impact Assessment and licensing processes. The Project will be subject to rigorous, independent regulatory oversight by the CNSC for all phases of the Project and will be required to demonstrate safety before any used nuclear fuel activities could proceed.

Further, the integrated Impact Assessment will consider not only the potential effects of individual Project activities, as defined in the IPD, but also how those effects may interact over time and in combination with

other activities. The risk of cumulative effects attributable to the Project is considered negligible based on studies completed to date and summarized in the IPD. Further assessment, including with respect to cumulative effects, will be undertaken through the integrated Impact Assessment process to confirm these conclusions prior to any regulatory decision-making.

The Project is also anticipated to pose a low risk of residual adverse socio-economic effects. The NWMO is dedicated to engaging with diverse Indigenous community populations, including women, men, youth, and Elders and committed to considering the Calls for Justice, with particular attention to Call for Justice 13, which relates to extractive and development industries. As part of the operational design of the worker accommodation camp for the Project, potential negative socio-economic impacts are being considered, including those related to women, gender-based violence, Indigenous communities, human trafficking and substance use. Additional assessment work will be undertaken as part of the integrated Impact Assessment and initial licensing process prior to any Project operations including those associated with site preparation and construction.

In addition, as part of the integrated Impact Assessment for the Project, the NWMO is assessing potential effects of transportation activities at the Project site, including accidents and malfunctions associated with transportation on the primary and secondary access roads. Transportation of used nuclear fuel beyond the Project site is not part of the Project. Such transportation would rely on existing vehicular infrastructure and is regulated through a separate federal framework administered by the CNSC and Transport Canada, which governs safety, security, emergency preparedness, and compliance of nuclear substances along transportation corridors.

Next Steps

The NWMO appreciates the opportunity to respond to Grassy Narrows' questions and welcomes the opportunity to meet with Grassy Narrows 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>

C: Grassy Narrows Land Protection Team