



March 13, 2026

APM-CORR-00657-302962

Chief and Council  
Ojibway Nation of Saugeen  
186 C Sapay Street  
Savant Lake, ON P0V 2S0

**CC:**

John Machimity, 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 Council,

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) thanks the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen (ONS) for its letter 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.

Your letter identified key issues related to (1) the scope of the Impact Assessment and CNSC licensing process for the Project, as defined in the IPD; (2) the regulatory process governing transportation of used nuclear fuel to the DGR; and (3) NWMO's engagement undertaken to date. In this letter, we seek to address these key issues and concerns in the immediate vicinity of the project site, and provide further clarity on these topics.

**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.

## **Transportation**

You have raised questions about the transportation of used fuel along Highways 11 and 17. Safety, accident risk, emergency preparedness, and regulatory oversight for the transportation of used nuclear fuel are comprehensively regulated by the CNSC, including in part through its transportation certification process. As part of the Impact Assessment for the Project, as defined by the Project activities outlined in the IPD, 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. If there are accidents involving used nuclear fuel shipments, we expect that they would be similar to conventional traffic accidents, with no release of radioactive material due to the nature of the transportation package.

Transportation of used nuclear fuel beyond the Project site is not part of the Project. Such transportation would rely on existing vehicular infrastructure is regulated through a separate federal framework administered by the CNSC, which governs safety, security, emergency preparedness, and compliance of nuclear substances along transportation corridors.

Before any shipments of used nuclear fuel would occur, the applicable transport package must be certified by the CNSC, the transportation provider must hold a valid CNSC transportation licence, and emergency response arrangements must be in place and approved, as required. Shipments cannot commence until these regulatory requirements are met, confirming that transportation is safe, secure, and compliant with Canada's nuclear regulatory framework. Such shipping is not expected to begin until at least 2043.

## **Engagement to date and going forward**

We understand that you have raised questions about NWMO's engagement with Indigenous groups prior to NWMO's submission of the IPD. Under the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act*, the NWMO was required to propose approaches for the management of used nuclear fuel and is now required to implement Canada's selected Adaptive Phase Management plan for the safe, long-term management of used nuclear fuel (described in further detail in Section ii of the IPD). The NWMO has therefore been engaging with Indigenous Nations and communities over the last 20 years, including with ONS, which has informed the development of Adaptive Phased Management and the Project.

Now that the IA regulatory process is underway, NWMO recognizes that engagement during the IA for the Project is intended to support the identification and consideration of potential effects on Indigenous rights and interests, and to inform the development of mitigation and follow-up measures. The IPD

represents the formal initiation of this regulatory process and is an early submission, not the final Impact Statement or Licence Application used by regulators for decision-making.

Although the DGR site is located in close proximity to the Indigenous host community, Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation, the NWMO recognizes that the Project is located within a broader regional context and invites engagement with Indigenous Nations and communities to understand how they may be affected by the Project.

### **Next Steps**

The NWMO appreciates the opportunity to respond to ONS' questions and welcomes the opportunity to meet with ONS 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>.

Thank you again for sharing the ONS' perspectives. We look forward to continued dialogue.

Sincerely,

<Original signed by>

Jessica Perritt  
Director, Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation  
<contact information removed>

Tel 416.934.9814  
Fax 416.934.9526  
Toll Free 1.866.249.6966

22 St. Clair Avenue East, Fourth Floor  
Toronto, Ontario M4T 2S3, Canada  
[www.nwmo.ca](http://www.nwmo.ca)