

The Regroupement des organismes environnementaux en énergie (ROÉÉ) is concerned about how the study on nuclear waste governance in Canada is unfolding.

This email is destined for the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

Parliament must absolutely become more involved in the governance and oversight of radioactive and nuclear waste. Historically, almost all decisions related to nuclear energy have been made without parliamentary involvement or debate, and therefore without Parliament being aware of the important issues regarding nuclear energy.

It is Parliament's duty to ensure that the interests of present and future generations of Canadians prevail over the short-term financial interests of the nuclear industry.

We support the recommendations of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility. The main ones are as follows:

1. We need a nuclear waste management and decommissioning agency that is independent of industry, and of agencies that promote the industry, such as NRCan. That was a unanimous recommendation of the Seaborn Panel after a ten-year Environmental Assessment process. And that waste agency should report directly to parliament on a regular basis, not just to the minister.
2. CNSC, the nuclear regulator, should not be under the Minister of Natural Resources but under Environment Canada. This will help remedy the predicament that CNSC has been captured by the industry it is regulating. CNSC should also report directly to parliament, on a regular basis.
3. Amnesia is bad policy. Heritage Canada should be archiving complete records of the radioactive legacies we are leaving to future generations, starting now. This necessity has been stressed by the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency for over a decade, but here in Canada it is not done.
4. Reprocessing used nuclear fuel to extract plutonium should be banned. It complicates the waste management issues and is a dangerous step towards enabling the proliferation of nuclear weapons.
5. Rolling Stewardship as an alternative to abandonment, should be seriously considered. Abandonment is irresponsible. Three "final repositories" for nuclear waste have experienced failures so far.
6. The current legacy of uranium mining in Canada is 218 million tons of radioactive sand that must be kept out of the environment for one million years. Parliamentary action is needed to keep these uranium wastes on the political agenda and ensure they are monitored and maintained safely.

Yours sincerely,

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