



Oral presentation

Exposé oral

**Written submission from
Johanna Echlin**

**Mémoire de
Johanna Echlin**

In the Matter of the

À l'égard des

Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL)

Laboratoires Nucléaires Canadiens (LNC)

Application from the CNL to amend its Chalk River Laboratories site licence to authorize the construction of a near surface disposal facility

Demande des LNC visant à modifier le permis du site des Laboratoires de Chalk River pour autoriser la construction d'une installation de gestion des déchets près de la surface

**Commission Public Hearing
Part 2**

**Audience publique de la Commission
Partie 2**

May and June 2022

Mai et juin 2022

To: Commissioners of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
From: Johanna Echlin
April 11, 2022

Re: May 31 Public Commission Hearing - Canadian Nuclear Laboratories - Near Surface Disposal Facility

My paternal great grandfather settled on the Ottawa River just across from Chalk River Laboratories in about 1870. My grandmother was born near the Oiseau Rock.

At that time the River and land were pristine - free from radioactive contamination.

This is not just any place on any river. This area of the Ottawa Valley is magnificent - very like the Group of Seven paintings with rock, sand, twisted pine trees, sparkling waters and glorious sunsets.

This is unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabeg - a land that had been so well cared for and preserved for many, many generations.

Every single person in this room should want to protect this land and water.

My father's parents had a cottage in the Fort William Bay. His early experience on the River obviously stayed with him as he returned with us to the River after the war. My two sisters and I spent all our summers on the River. I have been coming every summer for 74 years. It is the place where our extended family congregates, now in multiple cottages. The River and this place is in our blood and is the glue that keeps us all connected. It's a place that calls us back year after year. In winter, our children dream of being on the River.

During the early years we knew nothing about nuclear reactors or Chalk River Laboratories ... my parents had no idea that there was a serious accident at CRL in 1952.

For most of my life we drank the water straight from the river.

Later we knew that there was a nuclear reactor at CRL but we were not made aware of any harm. We had no idea that radioactive waste was leaking into the river.

Everything changed in 2016 - we heard the shocking news that private companies had signed a contract with the federal government. The consortium planned to build a radioactive waste facility at CRL and that they would transport radioactive waste from all

over the country to Chalk River Labs.. This news seemed entirely unbelievable and crazy to us - how could any plan involve bringing more waste to this vulnerable area already contaminated with wastes from seventy years of nuclear activities.

That summer our association, Old Fort William Cottagers' Association, adopted a resolution opposing this plan to bring more waste to this very vulnerable area that is surrounded by water - wetlands, streams, creeks, lakes and the Ottawa River.

I vowed that I would devote the next year of my life investigating and opposing this plan. It's now six years later. I haven't stopped and so many of us have not stopped.

Every which way you turn CNL's plan it defies logic - the site is completely wrong, the facility is wrong for the types of waste that would be emplaced there. What CNL tells the public about the waste is far from what is actually going to happen. Even if there is no unforeseen catastrophe, this dump, designed for 550 years under the best circumstances, will leak its hazardous contents onto the land and into the river as it disintegrates.

Poisoning our land, our water, our air, our vulnerable creatures and our bodies - Is there anything sane about this?

Commissioners, the impact of what has been going on at CRL is not acknowledged. Our communities have suffered. Our water is being compromised, our health affected. To deny this is blindness. The risks involved with this proposal must be recognized.

The powers that be - don't hear us and don't respond. It feels like a steam roller coming upon us.

Commissioners - We call for reason, for sanity.

The seven decades of accumulated legacy wastes at Chalk River must be cared for safely in a suitable location removed from the Ottawa River and in a suitable facility that will actually contain the wastes and isolate them from the biosphere.

Commissioners - Safety must come first.

Do not approve CNL's license application. Alternatives must be investigated that will protect the Ottawa River, the region, and the public.