



Date: 2024-02-09
File / dossier : 6.02.04
e-Doc PDF : 7217994

Update from CNSC Staff

Mise à jour du personnel de la CCSN

Follow up from 2018 Public Hearing on Licence Renewal for OPG Pickering Nuclear Generating Station

Suivi à la suite de l'audience publique tenue en 2018 pour le renouvellement du permis d'OPG pour la centrale nucléaire de Pickering

Update from CNSC Staff on the decision regarding the inclusion of radionuclides as a chemical of mutual concern under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (Action item #19575)

Mise à jour du personnel de la CCSN sur la décision relative à l'ajout des radionucléides comme produits chimiques sources de préoccupations mutuelles aux termes de l'Accord relatif à la qualité de l'eau dans les Grands Lacs (Suivi # 19575)

Commission Meeting

Réunion de la Commission


February 21, 2024

Le 21 février 2024



To / À Denis Saumure
 Commission Registry
 c.c.: P. Elder, R. Richardson, V. Sesin, M. Fabian
 Mendoza, M. McMillan

From / De Haidy Tadros
 Director General
 Directorate of Environmental and Radiation Protection
 and Assessment



Security Classification - Classification de sécurité	
Unclassified	
Our File – Notre référence	
77219918 (FR) / 7168676 (ENG)	
Your File - Votre référence	
RIB 19575	
Date	Tel. No. - N° de tél.
February 9, 2024	

Subject / Objet RIB Action #19575 – Update on Decision on Radionuclides as Chemicals of Mutual Concern

ISSUE

During the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station relicensing hearing in 2018, the Commission requested comments from The Canadian Nuclear safety Commission (CNSC) staff and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) on the nomination of radionuclides as Chemicals of Mutual Concern (CMCs) under the [Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement](#) (GLWQA). These discussions were summarized in Paragraph 414 of the Pickering Licence Renewal 2018 [Record of Decision](#) with a request that the Commission be updated on the decision made by ECCC on the nomination.

To date, four updates have been provided to the Registry, in 2019, (e-Doc:6067323), 2020 (e-Doc: 6443947), 2021 ([CMD 22-M8](#)), and 2022 ([CMD 23-M6](#)), all indicating that no decision had been made by ECCC on the nomination.

This memo provides a fifth update for RIB Action #19575.

BACKGROUND

The GLWQA is an agreement between Canada and the United States of America (U.S.), first signed in 1972 and amended in 2012 with inclusion of [Annex 3: Chemicals of Mutual Concern](#). A key objective of this Annex is to identify CMCs from anthropogenic sources that both countries agree to being potentially harmful to human health or the environment. ECCC leads the implementation of the Agreement for Canada while the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) leads U.S. activities under the Agreement.

One way that chemicals can be considered as a CMC is through being nominated by external stakeholders. Following this process, in 2016, a group of 110 stakeholders led by the Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) and the Toxics-Free Great Lakes Binational Network submitted a [Nomination](#) to designate radionuclides as CMCs under the GLWQA. The CNSC undertook an assessment of the nomination at the request of ECCC. The findings were published in the [2018 CNSC](#)

[CMC Assessment](#) which is available on the CNSC website. Likewise, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), at the request of the U.S. EPA, undertook a review of the nomination, and published the [U.S. NRC's Assessment](#) in 2017. Both the CNSC and U.S. NRC concluded that radionuclides are not recommended as candidate CMCs for further evaluation under Annex 3 of the GLWQA. The assessments were posted on [Binational.net](#), which is a shared website for joint work undertaken by the Governments of Canada and the U.S. regarding the GLWQA.

An evaluation of the nomination was put on hold while ECCC and the U.S. EPA worked together to develop a set of binational screening criteria to provide a consistent framework for reviewing nominated CMCs. The formal [Binational Screening Criteria](#) were published in 2021. The criteria were accompanied by a [Guidance Document for Annex 3 Nominations](#) and an [Example CMC Nomination](#).

Stakeholders that had previously submitted nominations were afforded the opportunity for renomination incorporating the new binational screening criteria. In May 2022, ECCC informed the CNSC of their receipt of a [Renomination](#) for radionuclides by the original nominators, CELA and the Toxics-Free Great Lakes Binational Network. The CNSC was requested by ECCC to review the renomination and provide advice with respect to ECCC's pending decision.

UPDATE

CNSC staff completed their review of the renomination, with a focus on whether any new information was presented that was not addressed in the [2018 CNSC CMC Assessment](#), and shared their findings with ECCC in August 2023 in a report titled *Evaluation of the Renomination of Radionuclides as Chemicals of Mutual Concern Under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement*. The report determined that the conclusions drawn in the [2018 CNSC CMC Assessment](#) continue to remain valid, and that radionuclides within the Great Lakes do not pose an unreasonable risk to human health or the environment. Therefore, radionuclides are not recommended as candidate CMCs for further evaluation under Annex 3 of the GLWQA.

The CNSC recently posted the 2023 [report](#) on the external CNSC website. A link to the report on the CNSC website is planned to be included on [Binational.net](#) alongside the U.S. NRC's evaluation of the renomination.

The U.S. NRC completed their evaluation of the renomination in October 2023 and provided the report to the U.S. EPA as well as publicly posted it on the [U.S. NRC website](#). The U.S. NRC concluded that radionuclides should not be designated as CMCs under the GLWQA.

Canada and the U.S. anticipate having the criteria-based screening of the renomination completed with a recommendation on whether radionuclides should become candidate CMCs to the [Great Lakes Executive Committee](#) by December 2024.

A further update will be provided to the Commission via memo at the end of 2024.