



**Written submission from  
Ava Richardson and  
Zenryu Owatari**

**Mémoire de  
Ava Richardson et  
Zenryu Owatari**

In the Matter of the

À l'égard de

**BWXT Nuclear Energy Canada Inc.,  
Toronto and Peterborough Facilities**

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**BWXT Nuclear Energy Canada Inc.,  
installations de Toronto et Peterborough**

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Application for the renewal of the licence for  
Toronto and Peterborough facilities

Demande de renouvellement du permis pour les  
installations de Toronto et Peterborough

**Commission Public Hearing**

**Audience publique de la Commission**

**March 2 to 6, 2020**

**Du 2 au 6 mars 2020**

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January 26, 2020

Senior Tribunal Officer, Secretariat  
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission  
280 Slater Street, P.O. Box 1046, Station B  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5S9

**RE: Intervention by Ava Richardson and Zenryu Owatari for the BWXT Licence Renewal (Hearing Ref. 2020 - H - 01)**

I, Ava Richardson, and my husband, Zenryu Owatari, have recently made the decision to return to Canada in June 2020 after living abroad in Japan for the past twelve years. Although I am a Canadian Citizen, my husband is a new Canadian Permanent Resident as of January, 2020. **We write to you now in opposition of the proposed pelleting plant for Peterborough, Ontario.** Here are our reasons why.

As you may recall, the world was shocked to witness the tsunami and subsequent nuclear meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant after the March 11th, 2011 earthquake. My husband and I worked and lived nearby in Tsukuba, less than 100 Km away from Fukushima when this frightening event happened. My school where I worked at the time, my entire neighborhood, and anyone within a 60Km radius around the Nuclear Power Plant evacuated as a result of the spreading radiation. Even today, there is a permanent 50Km irradiated no-go zone around the Nuclear Power Plant that will remain, indefinitely. There are still over 20 000 evacuees living in temporary housing around Fukushima Prefecture as they will never be able to return home. Countless animals died, hundreds of businesses closed, hundreds of thousands of people have been permanently displaced, and childhood lymphoma cancer rates are on the rise.

As survivors of the aftermath of the nuclear meltdown, I will try to express the fear and life-changing events that happened afterwards and how this might relate to the proposed pelleting plant in Peterborough. First, the stress of knowing that radioactive materials were contaminating food, water and the air surrounding our area was enough to cause 60% of my school's student population to move abroad, including several teachers. Even though we were outside of the 60Km evacuation zone around the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, the fear of becoming ill or being exposed to airborne radioactive materials kept many people away, permanently. Countless businesses, schools and homes have never been opened again. Our beloved principal and school headmaster, Mr. Kano, died of stress-related causes one week after the meltdown. The stress of losing so many of the student body and staff was too much to bear.

Every person we came into contact with after the radiation disaster were suffering from anxiety, stress, insomnia, depression and more. Some, years later, are still dealing with mental health issues related to the trauma they experienced from the spread on radiation. My husband and I moved 700km south to Kyoto a few months after the radiation disaster. I cannot begin to express the worry and anxiety my

Ontario family felt for our safety. **Let me be clear; it was not the earthquake, the incessant aftershocks or even the tsunami that caused long-lasting physical and mental health illnesses for countless people in Japan; it is the invisible, terrifying spread of radiation and the knowledge that in the future, we will all pay the price with our health.**

You might be thinking that a pelleting plant in Peterborough is a far cry from the dangers of a fully operational nuclear power plant in Japan; however, we disagree. Contamination and the spread of radioactive materials into residential areas can cause long-lasting, devastating effects for the people living in the area. Fukushima has taught us many things. Here are a few key points.

- Yes, it is possible to be prepared for many emergency situations however, it is the unpredictable events that are more worrying. No one could have anticipated such a huge tsunami wiping out the cooling system of a nuclear power plant in Japan. Just like no one might anticipate a tornado or catastrophic flooding in Peterborough damaging a pelleting plant. No one might anticipate an act of terror or human error in our peaceful, beautiful Peterborough causing the spread of contamination from a pelleting plant. But this would be a mistake. Unforeseen dangers are exactly why we should deny any form of radioactive pelleting production near schools and residential neighborhoods.
- Extreme weather due to climate change is becoming more common. Tornadoes, ice storms, fire, and flooding are now regular occurrences around the globe, including Peterborough. Any one of these events has the potential to cause damage to the proposed pelleting plant and potential release of radioactive emissions into the environment around Peterborough. We must protect the health of our environment around our community for the sake of our children and their future.
- Trace amounts of radioactive materials bioaccumulate in humans, especially children. Allowing radioactive substances like dust from the proposed pelleting plant near schools and neighborhoods is a grave mistake. The proposed location for the plant is unreasonably close to a residential area for it to be considered safe, even with “acceptable trace emissions”. Children are most at-risk!
- An accident near residential neighborhoods could have long-term devastating effects on the Peterborough community. Fukushima is a prime example of this. An unforeseen event has caused permanent, indefinite loss to hundreds of thousands of homes and their communities in Japan. Even a smaller emergency event at a pelleting plant in Peterborough could have huge financial, economic, health, and environmental implications for the densely populated neighborhoods surrounding the area.

My husband and I have been anticipating a happy return to Peterborough for several years. The news of this proposed pelleting plant in Peterborough has been devastating to us. We have lived through catastrophic times here in Japan, have moved our entire lives across the country to avoid radiation exposure, have quit our jobs, and started our life anew. We did this all because of an unforeseen, unpredictable event that caused wide-spread release of radioactive materials into the air, water and soil.

There are no words to describe the fear and trauma this has caused us and our communities. With the potential of a pelleting plant now in question, my husband and I must now consider living elsewhere in Ontario, and not in Peterborough. We will no longer put ourselves or our loved ones at risk of exposure to contaminants after our experience with Fukushima. The world has learned from this disaster. So should Peterborough and decision-makers in the nuclear power industry. As a community, we must make the best, long-term, sustainable choices for our environment and our health.

**Pelleting is an industrial activity dealing with dangerous, radioactive materials that can and will spread into our Peterborough community. For these reasons, we strongly oppose pelleting in the Peterborough area.**

Sincerely,

Ava Richardson and Zenryu Owatari