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Written submission from Lisa Shaw-Verhoek

Mémoire de Lisa Shaw-Verhoek

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

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Canada

Written Submission for the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
Prepared by: Lisa Shaw-Verhoek, MSW
Date: April 11, 2022

Please review my thoughts and concerns regarding the application by Canadian Nuclear Laboratories Limited (CNL) for the Chalk River Laboratories (CRL) site to build a near surface disposal facility (NSDF) for low level radioactive waste on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin People.

I have strong connections to this territory which is also known as the Ottawa Valley as I am a fifth generation settler who grew up in Pembroke, Ontario. My family owns property at Fraser's Landing, Quebec which is located northwest diagonally across the Ottawa River from the proposed site. From the front porch, I can see the buildings at CNL. On this property there is abundant wildlife including beaver, deer, and even moose. It is well known that this specific section of the river contains Lake Sturgeon, *Acipenser fulvescens*, Canada's largest freshwater fish which is identified as a Species at Risk in Ontario. In 1996, my four year old son caught and with help from his father released one of these amazing creatures at Fraser's Landing. According to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Lake Sturgeon "has a skeleton made up of cartilage instead of bones, weighing up to 180 kilograms and reaching over two meters long. The Lake Sturgeon has ancestral ties to related species dating back 200 million years and can live more than 100 years." (https://www.ontario.ca/page/lake-sturgeon-species-risk)

Frank Weldon Beatty, known as "Weary Beatty" the Ontario Surveyor General was asked by Canadian Federal Government officials to confirm that Duck Lake would be a choice location for the town site for a "secret nuclear facility". Instead he pointed them in a different direction and the town of Deep River was developed as a model community on the Ottawa River with natural beauty and amenities that were unknown in most rural settings.

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) or "The Plant" has been an important research and economic engine at the Chalk River Location. It provided employment and financial stability for many, many families. When I was young growing up in Pembroke, several of my childhood friends' parents took a green AECL bus up Highway 17 to work. As an adult, I visited AECL as part of my employment duties as a professor at Algonquin College's Pembroke Campus to supervise students on field placements. When I hosted a group of students from British Columbia on a Canada 125 Exchange Program, we visited AECL as part of our touring of Renfrew County. When I had a diagnosis of Non Hodgkins Lymphoma, I required a test at The Ottawa Hospital General Campus that used isotopes before I could start chemotherapy treatment. At the time, the AECL Chalk River Reactor that produced isotopes was shut down and my test was delayed until isotopes from South Africa could be obtained.

I share these insights because I have observed the positive effects of AECL. I am also very familiar with the disaster that took the life of Stephen Whelan, a worker at AECL Chalk River on December 13, 1950. Stephen Whelan's death, which occurred as a result of an explosion, left his widow Rita with their infant daughter Kathleen. This accident created radioactive waste. In the aftermath and cleanup, many people put their health at risk.

Over the years of operations at this site, a variety of radioactive waste has been the result and something MUST be done to deal with it in a safe and responsible manner that will protect our earth, the people and the animals.

Because the location of the contaminated materials at CNL Chalk River is in such close proximity to the Ottawa River, this work must be conducted with the ultimate care and precision. Why? The reason is because the Ottawa River is the drinking water source for millions of people and animals.

It seems to me that the "privatization" of this Nuclear Facility by the government was a decision that created a lot of new variables. I simply do not have the confidence that those who want to build a NSDF at Chalk River can do this in a manner that will ensure long term safety of the environment and the security of the drinking water system. There are others who will present and confirm that radioactive waste causes damage and potential death to human and animals. There are yet others who will drill down explaining the long term lives of radioactive components and the specific dangers that occur when they are exposed to changes within a NSDF, or are exposed to water.

I respectfully ask that permission to create a NSDF at Chalk River be denied. Other options must be explored to deal with the radioactive waste that has been created. There is simply too much speculation and risk at this time. Someone must speak for the animals in this territory including the beaver, deer, moose and sturgeon that I mentioned earlier in my comments. Finally, the future generations of people, must be protected from a hasty decision. I believe a NSDF so close to the Ottawa River will negatively affect and impair life, water and earth.