



CMD 26-M23 - Update on Decision on Radionuclides as Chemicals of Mutual Concern

Classification	Level of security: Unclassified
Type of CMD	Status Update
CMD Number	26-M23
Reference CMD(s)	22-M8, 23-M6, 24-M9, and 25-M6
Public meeting date	13 February 2026
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Summary	Commission requested updates on the Great Lakes Executive Committee (GLEC) decision as to whether radionuclides will be formally considered as chemicals of mutual concern under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.
Actions required	There are no actions requested of the Commission. This CMD is for information only.



CMD 26-M23

Update on Decision on Radionuclides as Chemicals of Mutual Concern

Signed by:

2026-01-07

X 

Signed by: Beaton, Dana

Dana Beaton

Director General, Directorate of Environmental and Radiation Protection
and Assessment



Update on Decision on Radionuclides as Chemicals of Mutual Concern

Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission



MEMORANDUM

NOTE DE SERVICE

To Candace Salmon
A Commission Registrar / Registraire de la Commission

Security Classification: **Unclassified / Non classifié**

Fully releasable ATIP: **Yes / oui**

2026-01-07

From

X 

De

Title / Titre

Signed by: Beaton, Dana

Subject: RIB Action #19575 – Update on Decision on Radionuclides as Chemicals of Mutual Concern/
Mise à jour sur la décision concernant les radionucléides en tant que produits chimiques
d'intérêt commun

ISSUE

Update on the status of the 2016 nomination by a group of 110 stakeholders led by the Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) to have radionuclides classified as “Chemicals of Mutual Concern” under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA).

DISCUSSION

During the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station relicensing hearing in 2018, the Commission requested comments from 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 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, six updates have been provided to the Registry, in 2019, (e-Doc: 6067323), 2020 (e-Doc: 6443947), 2021 (CMD 22-M8), 2022 (CMD 23-M6), 2023 ([CMD 24-M9](#)), and 2024 ([CMD 25-M6](#)), all



indicating that no decision had been made by the Canadian authority (Canadian Water Agency¹) on the nomination.

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

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. The CWA 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 CMCs 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 CMCs 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 CMCs 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. ECCC requested CNSC to review the renomination and provide advice with respect to ECCC's pending decision.

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

¹ Previously, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) led the implementation of the Agreement for Canada. The CWA was [established in October 2024](#) as a standalone federal entity, and at that point responsibility for coordinating Canada's implementation of the GLWQA moved from ECCC to the CWA.



that the conclusions drawn in the [2018 CNSC CMCs 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 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.

In February 2024, the CNSC posted the 2023 report on the external CNSC website; it is hence referred to as [2024 CNSC CMCs Assessment](#). A link to the report on the CNSC website was included on [Binational.net](#) alongside the U.S. NRC's evaluation of the renomination.

UPDATE

As part of CWA's engagement efforts with nominators, CNSC staff attended two meetings, in March and July 2025, presenting a summary of the CNSC's review and conclusions, as well as informing nominators about public access to Canadian radionuclide release data and opportunities for public participation in the review and approval process for nuclear projects in Canada.

During the June 2025 [Great Lakes Executive Committee](#) (GLEC) meeting, the Canadian and U.S. co-leads for Annex 3 presented their joint recommendation that radionuclides should not be designated as candidate CMCs, based on their screening conducted against the binational screening criteria. Following the June 2025 GLEC meeting, the nominators, as had been previously agreed, were invited to provide feedback on the Annex 3 co-leads' recommendation by September 5, 2025.

The nominators submitted additional information during this timeframe. Upon request by CWA, CNSC staff reviewed this material and provided advice to CWA, indicating that the additional information submitted does not change CNSC staff's recommendation regarding the nomination.

At this stage, the Annex co-leads are seeking final U.S. NRC input on the additional information before finalizing their decision on the nomination.

NEXT STEPS/CONCLUSION

CNSC staff continue to provide support to CWA as requested and will report to the Commission when the GLEC has made their final decision.