



**CMD 26-M13.19**

Date: 2026-04-15

**Written Submission from  
Deirdre McGahern**

**Mémoire de  
Deirdre McGahern**

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**Mid-term update from BWXT Nuclear  
Energy Canada Inc. on licensed activities  
at its Toronto and Peterborough facilities**

**Mise à jour de mi-parcours sur les  
activités autorisées de BWXT Nuclear  
Energy Canada Inc. à ses installations de  
Toronto et de Peterborough**

**Commission Meeting**

**Réunion de la Commission**

May 2026

Mai 2026

April 10, 2026

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

RE: BWXT Nuclear Energy Canada Inc. FFL-3620/2030 and FFL-3621.00/2030  
Mid-Term Licence

Dear Commission,

I am submitting this written intervention and would also like to request the opportunity to make an oral presentation at the Peterborough hearing. I have included 18 slides with this submission, attached as a separate PDF document.

My home is located less than 500 meters from the BWXT facility in Peterborough, Ontario. I purchased it in 2011 after deliberately trying to move into this neighbourhood to live close to friends. At the time, I did not know that I was also moving next to a Class 1 Nuclear Facility located on one of Canada's most contaminated industrial properties—General Electric's, now GE Vernova, 50-acre site.

When I found the house—a small wood-framed structure on a large lot—it needed a ton of work, but it had a great feel and lots of potential.

Over the next 10 years, I completely renovated it. I am a straw bale builder and the owner of Strawworks Inc., a company specializing in super-insulated, non-toxic wall systems using natural and local materials, and my renovation reflects this.

I removed old carpets, wallpaper, and panelling, and rebuilt the house using environmentally responsible methods. I increased insulation beyond the building code requirements, adding cellulose insulation to achieve approximately R-30 in the walls and R-80 in the roof. I waterproofed and insulated the basement, replaced plumbing and electrical systems, and carefully selected non-toxic materials throughout.

The result is a home that is warm, dry, energy-efficient, and healthy. It requires no air conditioning and uses significantly less fuel to heat. Where the previous owner burned 2–3 cords of wood and used oil heat, I now heat solely with 1–2 cords of wood per year. Through efficiency improvements and careful material choices, I have significantly reduced the home's carbon footprint.

I also prioritized indoor air quality. Many modern construction materials contain harmful chemicals that off-gas in our homes. I invested time and resources into sourcing non-toxic alternatives. This was more difficult and more expensive, but to me it is fundamental.

My home now serves as a demonstration space for my business. It showcases natural building techniques, energy efficiency, and healthy material choices. It is something I am proud of, and it represents a significant personal and financial investment.

However, if BWXT moves pelleting operations to Peterborough, it will undermine everything I have worked so hard for.

As the old adage, what's the point of having a home if you don't have a healthy planet to put it on? I ask you: what is the point of creating a non-toxic home in a neighbourhood where a company is permitted to release significant amounts of radioactive and heavy metal emissions?

According to BWXT's own reporting, their current pelleting facility in Toronto released 46.2 grams of uranium into the air over five years, compared to less than one gram from the Peterborough facility over the same period. This is a substantial increase in radioactive heavy metal emissions.

As noted by physicist Dr. Gordon Edwards, 46.2 grams of uranium powder contains 35 quadrillion particles at 0.3 microns in diameter. Inhaling even a single particle has the potential to cause serious long-term health effects. This is not a risk I am willing to accept.

If pelleting begins, uranium emissions in my neighbourhood will increase significantly compared to when I purchased my home. As a nearby resident and stakeholder, this is unacceptable.

I have visited BWXT's current pelleting facility in Toronto and have seen the radioactive warning signage. I do not want to radioactive signs in my neighbourhood. I do not want radioactive materials in my neighbourhood. The scientific consensus is that beyond natural background levels, there is no safe level of exposure to radiation.

Beyond physical risk, there is also the issue of stigma. I am already experiencing it. Friends have told me they would no longer feel comfortable gardening in my backyard if pelleting begins. This affects my enjoyment of my home and ultimately its value. My neighbourhood will bear a disproportionate share of this stigma simply due to proximity, and that is unfair.

This area has already endured decades of industrial contamination from more than 100 years of General Electric operations on this site, and now, we are also facing GE's proposed demolition.

On September 12, 2025, I received a letter from GE Vernova stating that the company has submitted a Notice of Intent to demolish buildings at 107 Park Street North. Given the site's toxic industrial legacy, this raises serious concerns about the release of airborne contaminants—including asbestos fibres, chemical dust, PCBs, and trichloroethylene (TCE)—into the surrounding neighbourhood and the broader Peterborough community.

The scale of the proposed demolition—approximately 910,000 square feet of historically contaminated buildings in a residential area—is alarming. To date, no regulatory body has required clear proof that this can be done safely without releasing hazardous materials into the community.

Furthermore, trust in the regulator is a major concern. In 2011, Shield Source Inc., a CNSC-licensed facility in Peterborough, completely lost control of its process and released approximately 30% of its annual tritium emission limit in just five minutes. This incident demonstrates that accidents do happen under the CNSC's watch, and when they involve radioactive materials, the consequences are serious and irreversible.

In summary, as a resident living less than 500 meters from this facility, I strongly oppose the approval of BWXT's licence renewal with the inclusion of pelleting operations in Peterborough.

This is not only about my home, but about the health of this community. There is no truly safe place to process uranium in populated areas. The risks—to human health, the environment, and community well-being—are too great.

Yours truly,  
Deirdre McGahern



2020 - Sign on BWXT building in Toronto (time for some new duct tape)



2011 - Cliff and I



2011 - Got the keys party



2011 - Gardening with friends neighbours behind.





2011 - Demolition



2011 - Wasp nest in the exterior wall



2011 - Chatting over the fence. Now we have a gate.



2013 - Framed a new roof over existing as a way of adding 24" of cellulose insulation (R-80)





2015 - Framing exterior walls and hanging them off existing framing to add insulation.



2016 - Insulating with dense pack cellulose to R-30





2016 - Interior lime plaster & pine window



2017 - Exterior pine siding & pine windows painted with linseed oil paint



2017 - Installing pine siding in the winter



2018 - Work weekend with Mom





2017 - Earthen floor with linseed oil varnish



2018 - Before & after sanding original pine floors



2018 - Pine siding on interior walls & lime plaster on exterior walls.



2017 - Chatting with neighbour while caulking windows before he heads to Prince of Wales Public School up the street.