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Oral Statement from

Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg

In the Matter of

Ontario Power Generation Inc.

Proposed Environmental Impact Statement for OPG's Deep Geological Repository (DGR) Project for Low and Intermediate Level Waste

Joint Review Panel

September 16 to October 12, 2013

Présentation orale par

Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg

À l'égard de

Ontario Power Generation Inc.

Étude proposée pour l'énoncé des incidences environnementales pour l'Installation de stockage de déchets radioactifs à faible et moyenne activité dans des couches géologiques profondes

Commission d'examen conjoint

16 septembre au 12 octobre 2013

Canada

DGR Joint Review Panel Hearing Written Submission in Support of an Oral Intervention"

Deputation on OPG's Deep Geologic Repository Project for Low and Immediate level Nuclear Waste by the Women's Healthy Environments Network (WHEN)

Submission to the Joint Review Panel on the proposal by Ontario Power Generation
to prepare a site, and to construct and operate a facility for the long-term management of low and intermediate level radioactive waste at the Bruce Nuclear site, near the shores of Lake Huron within the Municipality of Kincardine Ontario

My name is Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg MES, PhD and I teach about environmental and ecosystem health to graduate students at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. My presentation today is on behalf of the Women's Healthy Environments Network (WHEN) of which I am the Volunteer Education Coordinator. WHEN promotes a clean safe environment and the use of the precautionary principle with regard to contaminants causing harm to our health and the ecosystem on which we depend. It is the reason that we do this work. WHEN believes that individuals can make a difference when they `Take Action for Prevention' in their homes and communities, but that there is also an important role for governments in protecting human health and the environment.

I am not paid to write or present this deputation, but do so once again, as a volunteer because of my deep concerns for the present and future of all life on earth, today in particular relating to the planned **OPG's Deep Geologic Repository Project for Low and Immediate level Nuclear Waste** in the Bruce Peninsula in Ontario. As an environmental health researcher, educator and film producer, ("Toxic Trespass" NFB co production on children's health and the environment and" Exposure: Environmental Links to Breast Cancer") I am aware that we have more than enough evidence of growing numbers of diseases and conditions related to preventable exposures of toxic materials including radiation from the whole nuclear fuel process.

Concerns about the health impacts of the nuclear fuel chain:
Since the catastrophic nuclear reactor accident in Fukushima, Japan, despite attempts to cover up the known continuing tragedy of the situation there and despite the change in policy in many other countries, Ontario plans to continue its problematic expensive nuclear program. Since and following the crisis in Fukushima, radiation is being detected in the air, water and food not only in Japan but also in many other parts of the world. Recent media reports attest to more and ongoing contamination of soil and sea water from it. The long term health impacts will likely be widespread and this nuclear tragedy is described as among the worst in the world. Initially, some reports revealed the negation, denial, and cover ups by the nuclear industry, the International Atomic Energy Agency and supporting governments. This denial and cover up was similar to that following other major nuclear accidents (example Chernobyl), with their language of "safe" and

"allowable" levels of exposure to radiation. With Fukushima, it has now been proven otherwise according to regular reports from Japan.

It must be understood and reiterated that there is no safe dose of ionizing radiation and even the smallest dose can cause cancer and other health effects (Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation Vll (BEIR Vll) National Academy of Sciences, 2005 (despite reassurances from CNSC staff). Indeed, radiation is a known human carcinogen according to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) of the World Health organization and all nuclear facilities release radiation. IARC lists a number of radionuclides as proven causes of cancer including those produced from the mining, milling, manufacturing and use of uranium fission in nuclear power plants.

As a former health professional, I can attest to the pain and suffering of patients with cancer and other environmentally linked diseases. No doubt, everyone reading this or present here knows of someone who has had cancer and/or who has died from it. In Canada, half of the male population and slightly less than half of the female population will be diagnosed with cancer at some time in their lives. Childhood cancer rates are expanding one per cent per year and if that child or grandchild is yours or someone close to you, you know what anguish that is, for not only the child but also the whole family. Of course, such anguish applies to those with breast and other reproductive cancers especially if it's a diagnosis of your mother, sister, wife, partner, daughter or friend. Therefore we must ask how much of this cancer is preventable? We know that for most cancers, only 5-10% are due to inherited genetic mutations so we must ask what is causing the other 90-95% to develop the disease and how much might be prevented.

We must also ask how much cancer can be attributed to radiation? And how much can be prevented? There are many safer more sustainable ways to provide electricity services than nuclear power that have been well articulated and presented to you at various consultations on Darlington and Pickering in recent years, but thus far they have been largely ignored in the decisions by the CNSC and the Ontario government – this even while the government has been supporting the Green Energy Act, which is just a beginning but a necessary one, to the required overall transition to a healthy future for all life in the province and ecosystem. Instead of continuing to produce more waste, there must be serious decisions taken to move toward sustainability which includes phasing out and decommissioning the reactors as soon as possible, not constructing new ones and put the billions of dollars saved to the safer, healthier solutions – energy efficiency, conservation and renewables – see www.cleanenergyalliance.org.

Over the past years, I have participated in various Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) consultations and proposals largely related to high level wastes (which will cost billions of dollars).

Our concerns and questions apply with this current proposal for low and intermediate waste levels:
Where is the proof of safety to reassure public concerns? A major element of the Precautionary Principle states the requirement of "Reverse Onus" meaning "Proof of

Safety Beforehand". Can anyone provide that proof? There is no guaranteed known way to do so given the complications of technology and longevity of the wastes.

Now Ontario Power Generation (OPG) has proposed to build a Deep Underground Geological Repository for low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste at its Bruce nuclear site in the municipality of Kincardine one kilometer from the shore of Lake Huron. This proposal is unprecedented in Canada, and should be treated with special concern for many reasons - notably that it will set a precedent for subsequent low- and intermediate-level waste sites, as well as a high level radioactive waste site in Ontario.

Tthe Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) and the federal government need to acknowledge that the current environmental assessment process is taking place in a policy vacuum. The federal government has not established a framework for managing long-lived, non-fuel radioactive wastes in Canada, despite a legal obligation to do so under the 1996 *Radioactive Waste Policy Framework.*

Until now, radioactive waste has only been kept in temporary storage facilities. This current proposal would set an historic precedent for permanent deep underground disposal of radioactive waste in Canada. Because the radioactive wastes will remain toxic for hundreds of thousands of years, this proposed project is a threat not only to the locality and the region, but also to downstream communities on the Great Lakes in Canada and the United States of America. Therefore serious consultations should include communities on the Lake Huron shoreline to the south of the Bruce facility, as well as on the Michigan shoreline of Lake Huron, as well as communities on both the American and Canadian sides of the St. Clair River, and Lake St.Clair
(see more on this below).

It is known that there is major public concern about radioactive waste disposal because it is long-lived and has the potential to affect human health and the environment.

In terms of alternatives to the current proposal part "alternative means of carrying out the project" include:surface and near-surface storage; alternatives to 'natural' containment (i.e.,engineered barrier); the status quo Western Waste Management Facility (WWMF); alternative storage systems; and reduction at source – this latter should include plans for a phase out of nuclear energy development and a clearly planned decommissioning timeline.

Despite CNSC lack of attention, the International Joint Commission on the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement makes it clear that Canadian nuclear facilities on the Great Lakes have had measurable transboundary effects. Should not the CNSC and other decision makers pay heed to this evidence?

The Environmental Assessment should consider a range of possible environmental impacts for a minimum period of one million years, reflecting the extremely long half-lives of various radioisotopes that will be placed in the proposed location. Would this not

provide clear guidance to OPG and remove the possibility of any selective interpretation of text in the scope as currently proposed by CNSC staff?

Transportation is an obvious major environmental issue for the proposed project. Since the WWMF and the new proposd site are both near each other on OPG's Bruce nuclear site, transportation between them is relatively short, however, transportation from Darlington and Pickering to the Bruce site is more problematic.

As such, WHEN is concerned that municipalities along the way must be consulted on the initiation of further decades of radioactive waste transportation through their communities. This is particularly relevant given that the CNSC is apparently refusing to consider site storage (i.e. at the Darlington and Pickering sites) as an alternative to the undertaking.

The "safety case" for the approval of the Deep Geologic Repository relies on technical arguments to demonstrate that the proposed repository will isolate the wastes for a required time period, which is effectively unpredictable., However, there are many admitted areas of uncertainty around the effectiveness of the (lack of) containers, the estimates of corrosion and gas buildup, the reliability of the computer models, the characterization of the geology and so on. This varies with the material but is certainly for the duration of several thousands of years. As such, key questions include, how such material would be able to re-enter the human environment? What conduits are available, in terms of permeable rock formations, fault zones, fracture zones (which may have no fault movement along them), and deep groundwater circulation? There is further uncertainty as to how the nuclear waste will interact with the barriers (ie corrosion of the barriers, the releasing of gases), seismic or glacial activity, and how radioactive material will react in a closed environment. Again, we must ask - where is proof of safety?

Therefore these issues are not just technical but must be regarded as ethical/moral ones and they cannot only be dealt with by geologists, engineers and other scientific professionals. We must not and cannot continue the mistakes of the past. The impacts will be local, regional and international including trans-boundary with the US and beyond, including economic and cultural ones. Activities and industries such as fishing and tourism could potentially be destroyed.

Since a significant proportion of the intermediate level waste consists of refurbishment waste, generated in the process of extending the expected lifetime of existing reactors, a commitment to phasing out the existing reactors entirely would go a long way toward reducing the need for further storage.

Therefore, our recommendations are to maintain the status quo regarding the existing nuclear waste including on-site storage at Darlington and Pickering, following with proposals to reduce waste (including to reuse and recycle it on site); expand the concept of "reduction at source" of nuclear waste to include reduction in demand for electricity through education, advertising and efficiencies ; expand the concept of "reduction at

source" of nuclear waste to include phase out of all existing nuclear plants and seriously invest in energy efficiencies,, conservation and renewable electricity production.

Also, many concerned Ontarians and Americans have been informed by well researched scientists, Members of First Nations, mayors and citizens groups leading to educational campaigns and policy directives which it is hoped you will take seriously in your deliberations. The information below reflects many of those concerns and recommendations.

STOP THE GREAT LAKES NUCLEAR DUMP SUBMISSION TO JOINT REVIEW PANEL Submission to the Joint Review Panel Concerning OPG's Proposed DGR on the Shores of Lake Huron in the Municipality of Kincardine, CEAA Registry Reference No.06-5-17520 - *May 13, 2013*

Stop The Great Lakes Nuclear Dump Inc. (STGLND) is a non-profit organization whose purpose is supported by ever increasing numbers of Canadians and Americans. STGLND filed its comprehensive submission to the Joint Review Panel on May 13, 2013.
To read the Executive Summary Only To read the full 62 page submission
Please see more from the STGLND group in the Press Release in the APPENDIX.

It is clear from this and other evidence that the Deep Geologic Repository Environmental and Safety Case in the www.opg.com/dgr does not provide reassurance of health and safety for now and in the future. As such WHEN recommends that the Panel consider the many disasters caused by accidents, human error or misunderstanding, poorly maintained equipment or safety practices, bad management decisions, cutting corners, malevolent intent and other causes. Reminders include Three Mile Island, Chernobyl, space shuttle Challenger, the Exon-Valdez Oil accident on the West Coast, the BP Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico, 9-11, Lake Megantic, Fukushima etc. reflecting that even with planning and precaution, there are too often disastrous outcomes.

The European Union Environmental Agency document, Late Lessons from Early Warnings Report (2013) Science Precautions and Innovation in the section "18 Late Lessons from Chernobyl, early warnings from Fukushima"stated**:**

The nuclear accident at Fukushima in Japan occurred almost exactly 25 years after the Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1986. Analysis of each provides valuable late and early lessons
that could prove helpful to decision-makers and the public as plans are made to meet the energy demands of the coming decades while responding to the growing environmental costs of
climate change and the need to ensure energy security in a politically unstable world.

This chapter explores some key aspects of the Chernobyl and Fukushima accidents, the radiation releases, their effects and their implications for any construction of new nuclear plants in Europe. There are also lessons to be learned about nuclear construction costs,

liabilities, future investments and risk assessment of foreseeable and unexpected events that
affect people and the environment.

Since health consequences may start to arise from the Fukushima accident and be documented
over the next 5–40 years, a key lesson to be learned concerns the multifactorial nature of the event. In planning future radiation protection, preventive measures and bio-monitoring
of exposed populations, it will be of great importance to integrate the available data on both
cancer and non-cancer diseases following overexposure to ionising radiation; adopt a complex
approach to interpreting data, considering the impacts of age, gender and geographical dispersion of affected individuals; and integrate the evaluation of latency periods between exposure and disease diagnosis development for each cancer type.

**Given the degree of uncertainty and complexity attached to even the most tightly framed
and rigorous nuclear risk assessment, attempts to weight the magnitude of accident by the
expected probability of occurrence have proven problematic, since these essentially theoretical calculations can only be based on sets of pre-conditioning assumptions. This is not an arcane philosophical point but rather a very practical issue with significant implications for the proper management of nuclear risk. With its failure to plan for the cascade of unexpected beyond design-base accidents, the regulatory emphasis on risk-based probabilistic assessment has proven very limited. An urgent reappraisal of this approach and its real-life application seems overdue.**

Whatever one's view of the risks and benefits of nuclear energy, it is clear that the possibility of catastrophic accidents and consequent economic liabilities must be factored into the policy and regulatory decision-making process. In the context of current collective knowledge on nuclear risks, planned pan-European liability regimes will need significant re-evaluation.

In conclusion, this panel of the **OPG's Deep Geologic Repository Project for Low and Immediate level Nuclear Waste** in the Bruce Peninsula has heard numerous deputations relating to opposition to the project. You have heard many aspects of nuclear power relating to costs, energy, waste, and more. WHEN understands and shares concerns for all these important factors, however believes a most important consideration for all of us must be health – the health of all people and the ecosystem on which we depend - in particular, that of the developing fetus, growing children, young girls' developing breasts in puberty and women, all of which translate into the health and wellbeing of future generations – your grandchildren and mine.

With all the commentary relating to the proposed Repository, relatively little is said about these health impacts while billions of dollars are being designated to a radioactive

carcinogenic, mutagenic and teratogenic technology rather than a sustainable energy plan, one which will not deny our children and theirs the safer conservation, efficiencies and renewable energy that we know much about and which they deserve. Since the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan, many countries are already embracing these policies, however we are way behind in Ontario, still pouring billions of dollars into the radiation related nuclear path.

As I have previously noted, my history of concern on these issues is long. I remember that many health professionals, organizations, individuals and policy makers supported the Advisory Council on Environmental Standards (ACES) Report in 1994 calling for the reduction and eventual elimination of the radioactive carcinogen, tritium emissions from nuclear facilities in Ontario. Many of us noted our disappointment that the ACES recommendations were not adopted despite the fact that there were over 2000 letters and cards in support of them. We pointed out that this disregard for public opinion could only serve to dissuade citizens' participation in such important processes which it hoped would not be the case in this instance. Recent decisions on the previous Darlington hearings have not been reassuring that serious well researched deputations challenging Ontario electricity policy are taken seriously. In fact, the recent Darlington Refurbishment hearing was referred to as a "Kangaroo Court" taken to mean, "Please don't confuse me with the facts, my mind is made up".

I mean no disrespect but it has become a question of your scientists vs. my scientists as though this is just another debate - but one not considering evidence of harm indicated by the National Academy of Science, the World Health Organization (WHO), Proposition 65 (California) and other well recognized scientific institutions worldwide classifying ionizing radiation as a known human carcinogen,.
Therefore, in light of all the above mentioned factors, we recommend that the Panel recommend transparent public hearings and consultations to ensure collaboration and transparency -mandated and taken seriously on all future decisions regarding electricity policy in Ontario. It is now well known that safe energy technologies are evolving quickly and are already more cost effective than prolonging the existence of aging plants, therefore is it not prudent to promote more of such sustainable energy options?

Approval of a Deep Geological Repository relies on a "safety case" being made, i.e. the setting forward of a set of technical arguments that can convincingly demonstrate that the proposed repository will isolate the wastes for the required time period however, the technical case has not been made for this DGR, or for other international proposals.

The areas of uncertainty are around the characterization of the geology, the effectiveness of the containers (none proposed, in this case), the estimates of corrosion and gas buildup, the reliabily of the computer models, etc.. These are all areas of uncertainty in this case, as in others. In the CNSC staff submission at http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/050/documents/p17520/91965E.pdf, starting at page 38, even they, the CNSC, permissive and pro-burial as they are, have to acknowledge the key areas of uncertainty with the OPG proposal.

The preferred alternative is that which reduces these uncertainties, and retains the option

of pursuing a sounder and more secure option in the future. That means continued storage at site, in engineered containers which can be monitored, performance can be measured, and the containers can be replaced or re-encapsulated if needed - as needed - at some point in the future. The argument is not that different from that for high level nuclear fuel waste, although for the low level waste there is not as a great a need for the storage areas to be dispersed as is the case for fuel waste, and would also be for the highly radioactive fuel waste.

There is no happy answer after the waste has been produced. The generation that produced it make a *de facto* commitment on the part of all future generations to play a guardian role, and to take on the burden of safe-keeping these wastes far into the future. And every day that more waste is produced, the burden increases.

A good example of what could and should be done is that of Quebec where the government recently directed Hydro-Quebec to develop an accelerated decommissioning plan for the Gentilly-2 reactor. To date, alas, OPG, however, has developed no such plan but it should and hopefully soon will.

I thank you for your attention and I look forward to your decision, one which I hope will reflect responsibility to the safety and health of all life in the ecosystem of the Great Lakes, in particular to future generations that include your grandchildren and mine and millions more in our beautiful land.

Sincerely

Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg MES, PhD

APPENDIX:

Notes from PRESS RELEASE of Stop The Great Lakes Nuclear Dump Inc. (STGLND)

Canadian citizens oppose Ontario Power Generation's plan to bury radioactive nuclear waste approximately 400 metres from Lake Huron

TORONTO, ONTARIO January 7, 2013—A group of concerned citizens has launched an online petition and a digital Billboard on the Gardiner Expressway in Canada's largest city to sound the alarm about Ontario Power Generation's (OPG) site selection process and plan to construct an underground nuclear waste dump on the shore of Lake Huron, in the municipality of Kincardine, Ontario.

A growing number of citizens are opposed to OPG's plan to **build an underground nuclear waste dump** (a Deep Geological Repository) **approximately 1km from shore and extending underground to approximately 400 metres from the lake.** Some of the nuclear waste remains toxic and radioactive for over 100,000 years. Federal government approval is anticipated within 9 months. ***"This dump puts at risk the fresh water of the***

Great Lakes, 21% of the world's surface fresh water relied upon by 40 million people in two countries," said Beverly Fernandez, member of Stop The Great Lakes...More Nuclear Dump Inc., one of several groups that have formed to raise awareness about OPG's proposal. *"We are bringing this issue to the public's attention because we believe that Canadians and Americans deserve the opportunity to learn more and voice their opinion on an issue that will affect generations to come."*

To date, **OPG has paid out $10.5 million** to the municipality of Kincardine and four adjacent municipalities in an effort to secure local support ***before approval to construct the dump has even been received.*** If OPG can secure federal government approval for its plan, they will pay the five municipalities in excess of $35.7 million over a 30 year period. The catch: the municipalities must not waiver from consistently "exercising best efforts to support the construction and operation" of the dump.

University professors, physicians and individuals intimately familiar with government processes are speaking out.

Former Deputy Minister, Environment (Ontario), Rod McLeod: *"I think the OPG proposal is very unwise."*

William Fyfe, retired professor emeritus in Geochemistry at the University of Western Ontario, and international consultant on nuclear waste: *"You do not put nuclear waste near things like the Great Lakes or the great rivers in case there's a leakage that you haven't expected".*

East Lansing Michigan family physician, Suzanne Sorkin: *"I worry about the safety of the Great Lakes water supply for my current and future patients. A leak from these dangerous wastes could contaminate Great Lakes drinking water and fisheries far into the future."*

Stop The Great Lakes Nuclear Dump Inc. is a non-profit organization comprised of ordinary Canadians who believe that the protection of the Great Lakes from buried radioactive nuclear waste is responsible stewardship, and is of national and international importance. In order to protect our precious natural resource – the Great Lakes – our group believes that radioactive nuclear waste should not be buried anywhere in the Great Lakes Basin. We are urging citizens to sign our online petition to send a message to the Minister of the Environment to stand up for the protection of the Great Lakes.

To learn more please visit: http://stopthegreatlakesnucleardump.com
To sign the online petition:
http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/stopthegreatlakesnucleardump.html
For media inquiries: Beverly Fernandez Email: info@stopthegreatlakesnucleardump.com
Tel: 519-546-9616

Ontario Power Generation (OPG), a multi-billion dollar corporation wholly owned by the Province of Ontario, plans to build a nuclear waste dump at the Bruce Nuclear Power Plant site, Municipality of Kincardine, Ontario *"located approximately 1 km inland from*

the shore of Lake Huron at the surface and more than 400 metres below the deepest near-site point of Lake Huron."
http://www.nwmo.ca/uploads/DGR%20PDF/EIS/Environmental-Impact-Statement---Summary.pdf, page 55

OPG owns Ontario's nuclear plants and all radioactive nuclear waste created. Low and intermediate level radioactive nuclear waste will be buried in the nuclear waste dump. **Intermediate level nuclear wastes are highly radioactive and many remain toxic for over 100,000 years.** Some are as...More dangerous as nuclear spent fuel. No scientist or geologist can provide a 100,000 year guarantee that this nuclear waste dump will not leak. Approval of the nuclear waste repository in the Municipality of Kincardine (DGR1) will set precedents (toxicity of waste, proximity to lake, geology) and smooth the way for the much publicized second underground nuclear waste dump for the high level nuclear spent fuel involving 21 communities (DGR2). Kincardine's DGR1 is the Trojan Horse in our midst.

OPG is paying $35.7million to Saugeen Shores, Huron-Kinross, Arran-Elderslie, Brockton and Kincardine. All are adjacent to the Bruce Nuclear Power Plant site. $10.5 million has already been paid even before approval to construct the dump is received. OPG can unilaterally cancel payment if municipality fails to support the nuclear waste dump proposal.
http://www.nwmo.ca/uploads_managed/MediaFiles/537_HostingAgreement.pdf

40 million people in 2 countries rely on the Great Lakes for drinking water.
http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/STDU_129778.html

OPG's Environmental Impact Statement document contains 3,432 pages; justification for choosing the Kincardine site is contained in the equivalent of one single page. OPG comment on acceptability of an alternative site option: *"Unknown"*.
http://www.nwmo.ca/uploads/DGR%20PDF/Environmental-Impact-Statement-%28Volume-1%29.pdf, section 3.4.2
An underground nuclear waste dump in limestone is unproven and unprecedented. Nuclear waste repositories in other countries are leaking.
http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/the-world-from-berlin-the-most-problematic-nuclear-facility-in-europe-a-576027.html

OPG's proposal is presently undergoing an Environmental Assessment (EA). Public hearings are in 2013. EA Joint Review Panel will report to the federal Minister of the Environment, who in turn will report to the Canadian federal cabinet, the ultimate decision maker. **Decision anticipated within 9 months.** Nuclear waste will be buried in the dump over a 35-40 year period. Ten years of pre-closure monitoring to be followed by unmonitored, unspecified institutional control and then abandonment.
In the words of Rod McLeod, a former Deputy Minister of the Environment (Ontario) *"…the OPG proposal is very unwise."*
http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/stopthegreatlakesnucleardump/signatures-page18.html, Petitioner comment #960

According to William Fyfe, a retired University of Western Ontario professor and an international consultant on nuclear waste *"You do not put nuclear waste near things like the Great Lakes or the great rivers in case there's a leakage that you haven't expected."* http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=f9ff8432-c3e9-41e2-877a-a9fc43a13aac&p=2

However, OPG states "Taking into account the findings of the EA studies, including the identified mitigation measures, it is OPG's conclusion that the DGR Project is not likely to result in any significant adverse effects on the environment." http://www.nwmo.ca/uploads/DGR%20PDF/Environmental-Impact-Statement-%28Volume-1%29.pdf, pg xv

40 million affected Canadians and Americans situated throughout the Great Lakes Basin that can and will be impacted if things go wrong were not consulted or informed and receive nothing but risk and uncertainty.

A recent public meeting (Aug 2013) in Port Elgin surrouned by cottage homes on the breathtaking shores of Lake Huron was the sixth stop of the 2013 Great Lakes speaking tour with stops already in Duluth (WI), Milwaukee (WI), Grand Rapids (MI), Toronto and Rochester (NY). The tour originally began last year with events in eight cities including Owen Sound, Sarnia and Kingston. Organized by Save Our Saugeen Shores, the event was standing room only with 470 people packed into the second floor of the Port Elgin Plex.
Cheryl Grace, an organizer for local groups Save Our Saugeen Shores and the Bluewater Coalition, introduced the speakers and gave an overview of the issues. The residents of Port Elgin and Southampton – a region known as Saugeen Shores - are at the heart of a dilemma facing the Great Lakes. Saugeen Shores is one of twenty one communities being assessed as a potential site for burying high level nuclear waste as the long term storage solution for Canada's nuke waste problem. Saugeen Shores faces another problem – the Nuclear Waste Management Organization along with Ontario Power Generation (OPG) have put forward a plan to bury low and intermediate level waste roughly 30 kilometres south of Saugeen Shores underneath the Bruce Power Plant in Kincardine, Ontario. The low and intermediate level deep geologic repository – or what's known as DGR 1 to local residents and those well versed in the issue – would be located within a kilometre of the shores of Lake Huron raising grave concerns about water contamination and the health and safety of the lakes. Opponents are also warning that DGR1 would set a precedent and pave the way for DGR2 or the high level nuke waste dump.
According to Bruce Power's own documents, Southhampton's water already had tritium levels seven times that of the provincial average in 2012.
Some residents have been working on protecting Lake Huron from nuke waste for years. They are an extremely committed and inspiring group; their passion to protect the waters of the Great Lakes is infectious.
National Chairperson for the Council of Canadians Maude Barlow provided context to the declining Great Lakes by outlining the global water crisis and warning that by 2030 demand will outstrip supply by 40 percent. She spoke about specific issues threats to the Great Lakes such as tar sands pipelines, including the ones running through the Straits of Mackinac, the nuke dumps, bottled water withdrawals and fracking. Barlow talked about

the need for a new water ethic where water is at the centre of environmental, energy, food and other policies. Water must be recognized as a human right, public trust and commons which means that no one is allowed to abuse, pollute or appropriate the Lakes.
We collectively share the lakes and have a responsibility to protect them. Barlow clearly stated a need to shift our relationship to water and the way that water is managed and concluded that the nuke dumps are an "act of insanity."
Sarnia mayor Mike Bradley – one of the most vocal opponents to the recently defeated nuke waste shipment – told the audience that the risk of the DGRs were too great for the Lakes warning that "we cannot keep playing Russian Roulette with the Great Lakes." Mayor Bradley had biting words for the Saugeen Shores council saying that he couldn't tell the difference between the local council and OPG.
Saugeen First Nation Chief Randall Kahgee had simple yet profound words for the audience saying that "for all of us, water is life." He said that he felt a responsibility to do everything in his power to protect the waters of the Great Lakes for tomorrow's generations so that his children and his grand children don't ask why he didn't do anything to protect the water and air.
Under the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, governments have an obligation to obtain free, prior and informed consent and Chief Kahgee vowed that without free, prior and informed consent, the DGRs would not happen.

Brockton Councillor Chris Peabody spoke last, a lone councillor in the region raising concerns about the potential harms of the DGRs.

The audience was deeply moved by the presentations, with some near tears throughout the talks. The DGRs are a heated topic in this and other communities. With Bruce Power being the main employer in the region, the town is deeply divided. Yet the receding shorelines that are an ever increasingly problem are a stark reminder that the Great Lakes are not limitless and immune to our actions. If there is one thing to take away from Maude Barlow's speech it's that a new water ethic is critical for saving the Great Lakes. We must ensure that the protection of water is paramount in energy policies. The time to begin that is now and the issue to begin with is the nuke dumps.