

Minister
of Natural Resources



Ministre
des Ressources naturelles

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0E4

November 5, 2020

Grand Chief Verna Polson
Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council
vernap@aantc-ctnaa.ca

Chief Lance Haymond
Kebaowek First Nation
lhaymond@kebaowek.ca

Dear Grand Chief Polson and Chief Haymond:

Thank you for your correspondence of August 26, 2020, regarding nuclear project environmental assessments at Chalk River Ontario. I also appreciate your acknowledgement and potential interest in engaging with us on Canada's policies in the area of small modular reactors (SMRs) and the upcoming engagement process on radioactive waste.

The Government of Canada places the highest priority on public safety and security and environmental protection in all nuclear activities in Canada.

As indicated in Natural Resources Canada's (NRCAN) letter of July 16, 2020, by the time the *Impact Assessment Act, 2019* was enacted, only those projects whose environmental assessment processes were already well underway would continue under the former regulatory process. In this instance, the Micro Modular Reactor Project, as well as Canadian Nuclear Laboratories' Near Surface Disposal Facility project at Chalk River Laboratories and its project to decommission the Nuclear Power Demonstration reactor at a nearby site, qualified and will continue to be assessed under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*, which is being led by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC).

NRCAN understands the concerns you have raised about reconciliation and whether we are using the highest standards and best practices to engage and meaningfully consult.

As an agent of the Crown, the CNSC is committed to upholding the honour of the Crown and meeting its legal duty to consult and accommodate. The CNSC will actively reach out to Indigenous Peoples during an environmental assessment review process, consult with potentially impacted communities, and continue to engage and build relationships after a licence has been issued.

Canada

I would also like to reiterate NRCan's offer to hold broader-based, meaningful engagement and two-way dialogue with you on the topic of SMRs. As indicated in NRCan's letter of August 12, 2020, which you acknowledge, we hope to be able to provide information to you on the federal government's policy, plans, and priorities regarding SMR development in general and to provide an opportunity for us to listen, understand, and discuss your views. Our aim is to have an open discussion and build a relationship for engagement on SMRs moving forward.

As also noted in the letter of August 12, 2020, in the fall of 2020, the Government of Canada will launch an SMR Action Plan with provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous Peoples and communities, industry, and other partners. The Action Plan will build on the 2018 SMR Roadmap and outline the progress and ongoing efforts across Canada on SMRs. More importantly, the SMR Action Plan will emphasize our commitment to ongoing meaningful engagement with Indigenous Peoples, as well as the importance of partnerships and benefits sharing.

In the coming months, NRCan federal officials will also be working with stakeholders and Indigenous groups and will be talking to Canadians to ensure that Canada continues to have a strong policy framework and a clear path for the safe long-term management of all our nuclear waste. I am pleased that you plan on engaging in this process, which currently remains on track for commencing this fall.

NRCan has been informed that the CNSC will respond separately to the specific concerns you have raised and offer further opportunities for the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council and the Kebaowek First Nation to be engaged in the decision-making for projects at Chalk River Laboratories.

Additionally, I would be happy to meet with you to discuss these issues in greater detail. Should this be of interest to you, please reach out to Mr. Emerson Vandenberg, a policy advisor from my office, by email at emerson.vandenberg@canada.ca.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Seamus O'Regan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

The Honourable Seamus O'Regan, P.C., M.P.

c.c.: Distribution

Distribution

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
ec.ministre-minister.ec@canada.ca

Ms. Rumina Velshi
President, CNSC
cnscc.eopresident-pdresident.ccsn@canada.ca

Ms. Candida Cianci
CNSC
candida.cianci@canada.ca

Mr. Adam Levine
CNSC
adam.levine@canada.ca

Ms. Diane Cameron
Director, Nuclear Energy Division, NRCan
diane.cameron@canada.ca

Ms. Maude-Émilie Page
Atomic Energy of Canada Limited
mpage@aecl.ca

Mr. Pat Quinn
Director, Corporate Communications, Canadian Nuclear Laboratories
pat.quinn@cnl.ca

Global First Power
info@globalfirstpower.com

Chief Adrienne Jérôme
Nation Anishnabe du Lac-Simon
adrienne.jerome@lacsimon.ca

Chief David Kistabish
Abitibiwinni First Nation
david.kistabish@pikogan.com

Chief Régis Pénosway
Anicinape Community of Kitcisakik
regis.penosway@kitcisakik.ca

Chief Sacha Wabie
Timiskaming First Nation
chief@parolink.net

Chief Steeve Mathias
Long Point First Nation
steevemathias@lpfn-aki.ca

Chief Casey Ratt
Algonquins of Barriere Lake
rattcasey@gmail.com

Chief Lisa Robinson
Wolf Lake First Nation
lisarobinson@wolflakefirstnation.com

Councillor Frankie Cote
Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg
frankie.cote@kza.qc.ca

Chief Wendy Jocko
Algonquins of Pikwakanagan
chiefcouncil@pikwakanagan.ca

Deputy Chief Dave Morris
Wahgoshig First Nation
dmorris@wahgoshigfirstnation.com

Ms. Lynn Moreau
Iroquois Anishinabek Nuclear Alliance
lynn.morea@anishinabek.ca

Ontario Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald
ORCRoseAnne@afn.ca

Quebec Regional Chief Ghislain Picard
gpicard@apnql.com

Mr. Emerson Vandenberg
Policy Advisor
Office of the Minister of Natural Resources
emerson.vandenberg@canada.ca