



September 3, 2014

Secretary of State John Kerry
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Re: Request for Proposed Ontario Power Generation Nuclear Water Storage Facility, Kincardine, Ontario

Dear Secretary Kerry,

On behalf of the Great Lakes Waterkeepers in the U.S., we urge your office to request the Canadian and Ontario Governments to withdraw plans by Ontario Power Generation (OPG) to build a permanent underground nuclear waste storage facility along Lake Huron, in Kincardine, Ontario.

Under the *2012 Protocol Amending the Agreement Between Canada and the United States of America on Great Lakes Water Quality*, both the United States and Canada acknowledge the importance of anticipating, preventing, and responding to threats to the waters of the Great Lakes. Both countries share the responsibility and obligation to protect these shared waters from pollution. We request the State Department to take action on behalf of the United States to protect this resource against the potential radioactive leakage from a proposed new underground waste repository along Lake Huron.

The proposed OPG facility would bury and abandon radioactive nuclear waste in an underground nuclear waste repository ("deep geologic repository") less than one mile from the shores of Lake Huron, and approximately 2,000 feet below the existing lake level. Some of this waste remains radioactive for over 100,000 years. With 40 million Americans and Canadians depending on the Great Lakes for their drinking water, fisheries, tourism, and quality of life, and with the Great Lakes containing 95% of the US supply of fresh surface water, this is one of the worst possible locations for a permanent nuclear waste burial facility. Furthermore, approval of this facility would set a devastating precedent for allowing other nuclear waste repositories to be located in the Great Lakes Region.

A deep geologic repository in limestone, as OPG proposes, is unprecedented and unproven as a safe medium for nuclear waste of any kind, anywhere in the world. OPG has stated to a Canadian "Joint Review Panel" as well as the US Environmental Protection Agency that they expect no significant adverse environmental effects from burying low and intermediate level nuclear waste at the Bruce Nuclear Generating Station site. However, no scientist or geologist can guarantee that this deep geologic repository will never leak and contaminate the Great Lakes. OPG's "safety case" for this project cited the Waste Isolation Pilot in New Mexico as successful precedent, referencing their solid design and safety record. However, a recent leakage accident led to indefinite suspension of operations at that facility, which is the only other operating nuclear waste deep geologic repository in the world. That this plant leaked after only 15 years underscores the great concern and risk associated with locating a nuclear waste repository next to the drinking water supply for 40 million people.

There is an urgent need to raise public awareness of this matter in the US, and to engage people, government, and all stakeholders through a public consultation process and public hearings in the affected Great Lakes States. Over the past 7 years, most of OPG's communications have been narrowly focused on Bruce County, Ontario with limited outreach to a small part of Michigan. As a result, residents and elected officials in communities along and near the Great Lakes, especially in the US, are unaware of this proposal and its potential risk.

The State Department should also be concerned that OPG did not consider or investigate any other sites for its nuclear waste. The Environmental Impact Statement for this project did not investigate other sites in Canada for this nuclear waste repository, as there was a "willing" community to host it in Kincardine, Ontario, and purported "community acceptance". We ask the State Department to stand with the citizens, local and state governments, and other stakeholders in the Great Lakes Region who have not been part of the conversation. Community acceptance should not be narrowly defined as Bruce County, but rather include legitimate interests and independent acceptance by all communities whose water would be at risk if the deep geologic repository fails.

Finally, there is valuable historical precedent of State Department intervention in projects like this. In the mid 1980's, the US Department of Energy was considering potential sites for a US nuclear waste repository, including three sites in Vermont. At the time, there was outcry from citizens and environmental groups in Canada that the proposed Vermont locations were in an area dominated by lakes, rivers and underground streams that flowed into Quebec. As a result of significant Canadian opposition, Joe Clark, then Secretary of State for External Affairs, intervened and the US government honored Canada's request to exclude any sites within 40 kilometers of the Canadian border. Clark was quoted in the press as saying "*the [Canadian] government opposes any development that could pose a threat to Canadians or their environment.*" It is now a proposed Canadian nuclear waste repository on the shores of Lake Huron that is posing a threat to Americans and their environment. We hope you will likewise intervene to protect our interests.

We understand there will be a two-week public comment period for this project opening September 9, 2014, and project approval anticipated as early 2015. We urge you to bring the full weight of your office to formally request that the Canadian government not approve any nuclear waste repository site located within the Great Lakes Basin, including OPG's proposed nuclear waste repository in Kincardine, Ontario.

We appreciate your urgent attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Nenn
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Great Lakes Representative

Sandy Bihn
Lake Erie Waterkeeper

Bob Burns
Detroit Riverkeeper

John Nelson
Grand Traverse Baykeeper

Jill Jedlicka
Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper

Lee Wilbanks
St. Lawrence Riverkeeper

Doug Martz
St. Clair Channelkeeper

Chauncey Moran
Yellow Dog Riverkeeper

Cc: Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada
Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario
John Baird, Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs

Attachment: 1986 Newspaper Article from *The Gazette*, Montreal