

February 26, 2021

Mayor Jim Watson
Councillor Fleury
Councillors
110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1

RE: Adopt the Resolution Opposing Chalk River Nuclear Waste Facility

Dear Mayor Watson, Councillor Fleury and Councillors:

I am writing to express Lowertown Community Association's concern that Ottawans' right to clean, safe drinking water is threatened by two nuclear waste projects proposed by a private-sector consortium operating Chalk River nuclear laboratories and other contaminated federal sites. While we border the Ottawa River we know this is an important issue for all Ottawa residents.

We therefore support the motion tabled on February 10, 2021 by Councillors Theresa Kavanagh and Catherine McKenney. Over 140 municipalities, including the City of Gatineau and the Montreal Municipal Council, have passed resolutions opposing Canadian Nuclear Laboratories' radioactive waste plans. These include a proposed 1 million m³ radioactive waste mound at Chalk River, surrounded by wetlands that drain into the Ottawa River less than a kilometre away; and the proposed entombment in concrete and grout of a shutdown nuclear reactor at Rolphton, Ontario, less than 100 metres from the Ottawa River, against the advice of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The review and licensing of these facilities is the mandate of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC). However, public health and the provision of clean drinking water are very much the mandate of the City of Ottawa. We believe the city has a responsibility to safeguard its principal source of drinking water, the Ottawa River. The National Research Council of the United States has produced numerous reports concluding that there is no dose of radiation that is completely safe for human health.

We draw your attention to a letter from the City of Laval (Water Management Service) to the CNSC commenting on the radioactive waste facility at Chalk River and its potential impact on potable water (September 15, 2017). The letter draws attention to the many operational impacts that would result from a catastrophic release of radioactivity into the Ottawa River, such as might result from extreme weather events, earthquakes or flooding. Such contamination could result in the city needing to provide alternative drinking water, sanitation and fire protection services for its population, and needing to undertake decontamination of its water treatment plants and water distribution system. It also raises the issue of compensation for the cost of such measures.

Lowertown Community Association
Association communautaire de la BasseVille

All such projects must be designed in consultation with First Nations. At this time, the CNSC has informed Canadian Nuclear Laboratories that they have not satisfied requirements for Indigenous engagement. Several indigenous organizations have passed resolutions opposing the Chalk River radioactive waste facility, the storage and abandonment of radioactive waste in unceded Indigenous territory, and the CNSC consultation process. As a result, we believe these projects should be halted and new solutions developed to clean up contamination at federal nuclear sites, in respectful collaboration with Indigenous peoples and affected communities.

We urge the City to adopt the Resolution Opposing Chalk River Nuclear Waste Facility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Norman Moyer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Norman Moyer
President, Lowertown Community Association
CC Councillors, City of Ottawa