

## Groups Warn Canadian Radioactive Waste Dump on Lake Huron Would Harm Michigan

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**Kincardine, Ontario, Canada** - At public hearings on Monday in Canada, a coalition of nearly two dozen grassroots Michigan environmental organizations urged the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) to say "no" to a low-level environmental assessment on Canadian nuclear utility Ontario Power Generation's (OPG) proposed radioactive waste dump, just over half a mile from the shore of Lake Huron, at its sprawling Bruce nuclear power complex. Bruce is just 50 miles east, across Lake Huron, from the tip of Michigan's "thumb."

"This unprecedented scheme to permanently dump radioactive wastes on the Lake Huron shoreline threatens future generations downstream for hundreds of thousands of years," said Kevin Kamps of watchdog group Nuclear Information and Resource Service.

"Such extreme risks demand the highest level of scrutiny and independence – not the low-level environmental assessment proposed by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission," said Alice Hirt of Don't Waste Michigan in Holland.

OPG's proposal calls for burying all of the so-called "low" and "intermediate" level radioactive wastes from 20 atomic reactors (8 at Pickering and 4 at Darlington, near Toronto; 8 at Bruce) in the Province of Ontario on the Lake Huron shoreline. By comparison, Michigan has 5 atomic reactors, four still-operating, and one permanently shut down. Most of Michigan's so-called "low" level radioactive wastes are dumped at a leaking site in Barnwell, South Carolina, as well as in Clive, Utah, although some is known to be buried at the local garbage dump in Waters Township in Otsego County, just south of Gaylord.

Many Michigan towns and cities, such as Bay City, Port Huron, Detroit, and Monroe, draw their drinking water from Lake Huron and points downstream – the St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River, and Lake Erie.

"My constituents depend upon the Great Lakes as a source for drinking water. I am very concerned about this dump leaking radioactive contamination into Lake Huron and the potential downstream impacts this leak could have on our supply of clean drinking water," said U.S. Congressman John Conyers of Michigan's 14<sup>th</sup> District representing parts of Detroit and the downriver area. Conyers is the ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee.

The battle against the proposed dump has been joined by 23 Michigan environmental groups concerned about trans-boundary risks of radioactive contamination of the Great Lakes. U.S. Congressman Bart Stupak has written to the CNSC and Canada's Environment Minister expressing his concern about the proposal, and has asked the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S.-Canadian International Joint Commission to investigate.

"In the 1980s and 1990s, Don't Waste Michigan stopped a scheme by 8 U.S. states to dump their radioactive wastes in Michigan," said Michael Keegan of Coalition for a Nuclear-Free Great Lakes in Monroe. "We won't sit idly by as the Canadian nuclear establishment attempts to create a nuclear sacrifice zone in the heart of the Great Lakes."

A national coalition of Canadian environmental organizations is also fighting the proposed radioactive waste dump. The local indigenous Saugeen Ojibway Nations are also calling on the CNSC for the proposed low-level environmental assessment to be upgraded to a Panel Review, the highest level environmental review under Canadian federal legislation.

"Our coalition of 72 grassroots groups, representing over 200,000 Michigan citizens, is very concerned about the precedent of a permanent dump for radioactive waste anywhere on the Great Lakes shoreline," said James Clift, Policy Director at Michigan Environmental Council (MEC) in Lansing.

The CNSC hearing will be held on Monday, October 23, 2006, in Kincardine, Ontario, Canada. Numerous Canadian and Michigan environmental groups will call on CNSC to: expand the study area to include downstream communities on the Great Lakes in Canada and the U.S.A., especially Michigan; include a worst-case accident scenario involving leakage of radioisotopes from the dump into Lake Huron; consider alternatives to current large-scale radioactive waste incineration at the Bruce nuclear complex.