

To the Honourable Joe Oliver,  
Minister of Natural Resources.

September 3 2013

Dear Minister:

My organization and many others support the government's position on ending the use of weapons-grade uranium (HEU, or Highly Enriched Uranium) at Chalk River by 2016. We congratulate you and your government on that decision. However we are concerned about the prospect of shipping high-level radioactive waste in liquid form, from Chalk River Laboratories (CRL) to the Savannah River Site (SRS) in order to fulfill Prime Minister Harper's commitment to return all residual weapons-grade uranium to the USA.

It does not add to the public's confidence regarding the safety of nuclear power, or in the independence of Canada's nuclear regulatory agency, to witness the head of that agency defending Canada's nuclear policies by attacking citizens who express concerns and propose alternatives. I attach a copy of a letter I have sent to Michael Binder, Chairman of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, in response to a posting by him on the CNSC website on August 12, 2013. The letter is in English and in French - both attached.

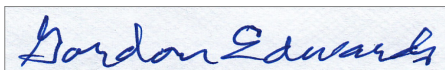
The importation of Highly Enriched Uranium to Chalk River is continuing, with a new import licence having been granted on August 27. The use of HEU is slated to continue at Chalk River through 2016. It is therefore not going to be possible for all irradiated nuclear waste containing HEU to be returned to the USA until after that date, as such waste will continue to be produced until then.

This gives ample time for the government to convene public hearings to address the potential environmental impacts associated with the transport of high-level nuclear waste in liquid form over public roads and bridges -- a matter of concern to a many Canadians. Such transports of liquid high-level waste have never before been attempted in North America. Two hundred municipalities in Quebec have passed resolutions opposing these precedent-setting shipments including the City of Montreal.

Public hearings will provide an opportunity to discuss alternative approaches such as (1) denaturing the liquid waste on-site so that the weapons-grade uranium currently in liquid solution is rendered no longer weapons usable, and/or (2) solidifying the liquid high-level waste on-site – as is currently being done with other liquid wastes at CRL.

I look forward to hearing if you will be proposing some form of public consultation to your cabinet colleagues or if you will be using the authority of your office to ensure that such public consultation will occur.

Yours very truly,



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attachments – Letter to Dr. Binder in English and in French.