

Joint Declaration between the Anishinabek Nation and the Iroquois Caucus on the transport and abandonment of radioactive waste

Posted on May 2, 2017 In Anishinabek Announcements, News Section
<http://tinyurl.com/yc7g9fjy>



Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee voicing concerns regarding radioactive waste transport and abandonment in Chalk River at the Chiefs of Ontario - Special Chiefs Assembly in Ottawa. Left to right: Chief Isadore Day, Ontario Regional Chief; Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee; Chief Clinton Phillips, Kahnawake; Chief R. Donald Maracle, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte; Akwesasne Grand Chief Abram Benedict; and Councillor Carl Hill, Six Nations of the Grand River.

Photo courtesy of: Bryan Hendry, Chiefs of Ontario.

LAC LEAMY, QC (May 2, 2017)—The Anishinabek Nation and Iroquois Caucus have unified and strongly oppose the transportation of highly radioactive liquid material from Chalk River to South Carolina and the abandonment of nuclear waste from Chalk River in a giant mound situated beside the Ottawa River.

Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee and Chief Clinton Phillips (on behalf of the Iroquois Caucus and Kahnawà:ke Grand Chief Joseph Tokwiwo Norton) jointly declare opposition and voice the serious concerns on radioactive waste at the Chiefs of Ontario – Special Chiefs Assembly.

“We, the Anishinabek Nation and Iroquois Caucus, have jurisdiction over the Great Lake and St. Lawrence River Basins as a result of Aboriginal titles, and the treaties that have been entered into by First Nations and the Crown,” stated Grand Chief Madahbee.

The transportation and abandonment of nuclear waste within the territories has the potential to adversely affect these rights, areas, and activities. The potential for long-lived contamination to the environment and to all living entities is too great.

“Many projects are being proposed, decided upon, and initiated in our territories without consulting our First Nation communities,” stated Chief Clinton Phillips. “A joint letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was sent on April 21, 2017, advising Canada of our concerns on these matters and we expect a prompt reply.”

“We are continuing to build consensus with our Nations. The Treaties are evidence of our inherent rights and authorities,” stated Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day. “The joint declaration states we must consider the future generations. As the leaders of today, it is our duty to preserve and protect Mother Earth. We cannot risk the long-term, irreversible destruction of our lands and waters, which are life-giving for all beings.”

The Assembly of the First Nation of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL) and Bawating Water Protectors are youth and grassroots First Nation citizens who stand united with the Iroquois Caucus and the Anishinabek Nation in the opposition of the transportation and abandonment of radioactive waste in their territories.

For the long-term management of radioactive wastes, the five principles that were all agreed upon are:

1. **No Abandonment:** Radioactive waste materials are damaging to living things. Many of these materials remain dangerous for tens of thousands of years or even longer. They must be kept out of the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the land we live on for many generations to come. The forces of Mother Earth are powerful and unpredictable and no human-made structures can be counted on to resist those forces forever. Such dangerous materials cannot be abandoned and forgotten.

2. Monitored and Retrievable Storage: Continuous guardianship of nuclear waste material is needed. This means long-term monitoring and retrievable storage. Information and resources must be passed on from one generation to the next so that our grandchildren's grandchildren will be able to detect any signs of leakage of radioactive waste materials and protect themselves. They need to know how to fix such leaks as soon as they happen.

3. Better Containment, More Packaging: Cost and profit must never be the basis for long-term radioactive waste management. Paying a higher price for better containment today will help prevent much greater costs in the future when containment fails. Such failure will include irreparable environmental damage and radiation-induced diseases. The right kinds of packaging should be designed to make it easier to monitor, retrieve, and repackage insecure portions of the waste inventory as needed, for centuries to come.

4. Away from Major Water Bodies: Rivers and lakes are the blood and the lungs of Mother Earth. When we contaminate our waterways, we are poisoning life itself. That is why radioactive waste must not be stored beside major water bodies for the long-term. Yet this is exactly what is being planned at five locations in Canada: Kincardine on Lake Huron, Port Hope near Lake Ontario, Pinawa beside the Winnipeg River, and Chalk River and Rolphton beside the Ottawa River.

5. No Imports or Exports: The import and export of nuclear wastes over public roads and bridges should be forbidden except in truly exceptional cases after full consultation with all whose lands and waters are being put at risk. In particular, the planned shipment of highly radioactive liquid from Chalk River to South Carolina should not be allowed because it can be down-blended and solidified on site at Chalk River. Transport of nuclear waste should be strictly limited and decided on a case-by-case basis with full consultation with all those affected.