

April 18, 2020

Open letter to South Bruce Council

Dear South Bruce Mayor and Council,

I am writing this open letter to the council on the issue of a proposed deep geological repository (DGR) for high level nuclear waste in South Bruce.

Before I continue, I feel it is imperative to disclose that I am employed with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) in the Research and Innovation Branch which works in concert with the University of Guelph (UofG) to manage the province's roster of 15 agricultural research stations. With that being said, I have disclosed to OMAFRA and sought permission (which has been granted) as a private citizen to assist grass roots interests in the local South Bruce community which are deeply concerned with the establishment of the proposed DGR.

Therefore, the opinions I will express in this letter are my own and are not those of OMAFRA or the UofG.

This letter is in follow up to previous correspondence I have sent to Mayor Buckle, CAO Leanne Martin and Councilor Mark Ireland.

I am deeply concerned with the process I am seeing unfold in the community regarding the DGR. I have been completing extensive research on my own and in concert with local South Bruce residents regarding the legitimacy of the site selection process by NWMO, safety and environmental concerns, geological concerns and impacts on the agricultural sector.

As I have referenced in previous letters to South Bruce, I have been extensively reviewing and saving copies of the minutes from the South Bruce CLC and the South Bruce Community Business Development Association (SBCBDA) and I am becoming increasingly alarmed. I am now able to document going back to 2014 how members of these different bodies have essentially made decisions on this project without broad consultation to the public. Comments and decisions made at these tables do not match what is being said publicly by this council, that no decision has been taken. A review of these minutes very quickly will lead a reader to believe that the "*learn more*" process regarding the DGR was quickly scuttled in favour of "*open advocacy*" for the project years ago. Statements from the minutes like "*we are playing to win*" this project are deeply troubling and demonstrate a narrative of bias in favour of this project going back several years unbeknownst to the broader public in South Bruce.

When I contrast these CLC and SBCBDA minutes dating back to 2014 with the NWMO survey presented to the public at the March 2020 CLC meeting, whereby it indicated only 50% of respondents in the community were somewhat familiar with the project and a full 34% were either not very familiar or not familiar at all with the project - this is not representative of a well informed community having only 16% be very familiar.

Even more alarming is the figure in that survey that indicated “*a large majority of responding South Bruce residents (82%) indicated that, prior to receiving the survey, they were aware that the project will only be implemented with the involvement of an informed and willing host community.*”

THERE IS NO CURRENT DEFINITION OR CRITERIA OF WHAT A WILLING AND INFORMED COMMUNITY IS. Therefore this question based on a sample size of 493 residents has no basis in meaning. **NWMO cannot ask residents a question for which there is no current answer.** There is no statistical meaning in having respondents answer a question for which there is no defined answer. Period!

Further, the Optioning and purchase of land in the community by NWMO when knowledge of the project is so low (i.e. only 16% very familiar with the project) and where there is no definition of what a willing and informed community is, demonstrates a complete lack of ethics and morals on the part of NWMO. These types of power play moves in the community are all designed to force the community down a path for which it cannot return. As a council you must be aware how ethically wrong this is? This is a key reason why there is currently a backlash in the community. As a council you must ask some tough questions of yourself. Who do you represent? The mandate of a well funded special interest group with billions to spend and a mandate to place the world's most dangerous waste in your community or the residents of South Bruce. You as a council need to make the timelines as your community is demonstrably worried about this project. NWMO and the Adaptive Phased Management do not drive these timelines, the community does! NWMO timelines are artificial and imposed. Why are you as a council following their timelines? NWMO needs to back off!

I was also very disheartened by the lack of discussion or acknowledgement of Mrs. Stein's letter re: “*What is a willing and informed community?*” at the April 14th 2020 council meeting.

Considering the nature of the letter and the important role the council must play in defining a willing and informed community, the silence exhibited further reinforces the sentiment that this council has already made up its mind. The public deserves more balance in the response from this council other than NWMO talking points.

In the absence of a plan to define what a “*willing and informed community is*”, I would like to offer some suggestions as a basis for starting this process and formulating a criteria for this definition.

For starters in order to make a credible and impartial attempt at this definition, the council must now begin a process of disengaging itself from the NWMO and the CLC to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest. The NWMO sponsored CLC cannot be a part of this decision process. The CLC is too one sided and comes with too much baggage. Any decisions regarding the definition made at the CLC table will have the perceived baggage of bias. The mandate of the NWMO is not that of South Bruce and should now be held separate.

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Council must set up their own separate process and it needs to include members of the community who hold divergent opinions of the project. This is required in order to stimulate discussion and debate that needs to happen at the community level so all voices and opinions can be heard.

Further, the council needs to commit to an open public vote/referendum on this project sooner rather than later in order to relieve some of the tension in the community. People are feeling hopeless and divided as a result of the current process and without a say in these matters. As has been the case in other jurisdictions for similar projects of this magnitude and scope, a 'super majority vote' from residents should be required in order to approve this project. 50% plus 1 is simply not acceptable under these circumstances for a project, that if it was initiated, there is no opt out for the community if things go wrong or negative unforeseen outcomes occur.

Legal counsel not connected with or recommended by the NWMO must be selected and retained with an expertise in the Ontario Municipal Act in order to guide this process. They must be appropriately vetted to ensure no real or perceived conflicts of interest exist.

I thank you for your consideration of my letter and look forward to hearing back from you soon. I look forward to the establishment of a fair and transparent process, separate from the NWMO sponsored CLC to determine the definition of what a "*willing and informed*" South Bruce looks like. The time for NWMO's CLC involvement in driving this process must now draw to a close. The Municipality must now consider this initiative on its own and apart from NWMO influence in order to rebuild credibility in the community.

Thank you,

Jason Wall