

Final licensing hearing for the NSDF

August 10, 2023

The Algonquins of Kebaowek, Kitigan Zibi and Barriere Lake First Nations are holding a public meeting on August 10, 2023, at 50 Sussex Drive in Ottawa, to make their final presentations to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission about the proposed nuclear waste facility beside the Ottawa River, the NSDF.

This is a very important hearing because it is the **final step** in the licensing process for the NSDF, the **first ever** proposal for **permanent nuclear reactor waste disposal** in Canada. It is also a **test of Canada's commitment** to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. A decision to license the NSDF would contradict four articles of UNDRIP ([see details here](#)).

There were “final” licensing hearings for the NSDF last year, in May/June 2022, but at the end of those proceedings it was recognized that consultation with Algonquin First Nations has been inadequate. Consultations with Kebaowek and Kitigan Zibi First Nations continued over the past year and included an Indigenous-led assessment of the potential impacts of the NSDF on Indigenous Rights. The findings of the assessment are summarized in [this booklet](#).

The hearing on August 10 is the culmination of a seven-year long environmental assessment process for the NSDF – a giant above-ground mound which would hold up to **one million tons of radioactive and other hazardous waste**. The proposed facility would be located on **unceded Algonquin territory**, less than one kilometer from the Kitchi Sibi (Ottawa River) on the side of a hill surrounded by wetlands which drain via a creek into the river. The proponent of the waste facility is a multinational consortium (SNC-Lavalin, Fluor and Jacobs), which was contracted by the federal government in 2015 to quickly and cheaply reduce the multibillion dollar cleanup bill for Chalk River Labs, site of eight decades of nuclear activities such as plutonium production for US nuclear weapons. The proposed facility is [expected to leak](#) during and after construction [and to disintegrate](#) after a few hundred years due to “natural evolution.” Ten Algonquin First Nations, the Assembly of First Nations, and more than 150 municipalities including Ottawa, Gatineau and Montreal, have serious concerns about the proposed facility. More information can be found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

During this event, three Algonquin First Nations (Kebaowek, Kitigan Zibi Anishinabe and Barriere Lake) will make their final presentations to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission via videolink. They will present the findings of their Indigenous-led study of the NSDF proposal, outline their concerns and highlight the threats to their Indigenous rights that would occur if the facility were granted a license. Other participants in the hearing — the proponent, CNSC staff and Commissioners — will participate remotely by webcast.