



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 14-5740, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NUCLEAR WASTE REPOSITORY IN THE GREAT LAKES BASIN

WHEREAS, Ontario Power Generation (OPG) is proposing to construct a deep geologic repository (DGR), which is an underground long-term burial facility, at the Bruce Nuclear Generating Station site in Kincardine Ontario Canada, and bury and abandon in the DGR all of Ontario's low and intermediate level radioactive nuclear waste, some of which remains highly radioactive and toxic for over 100,000 years. The proposed site is approximately one kilometre inland from the shore of Lake Huron and about 400 metres below the lake level; and

WHEREAS, Ontario Power Generation did not consider or evaluate any other actual sites for the location of the proposed DGR; and

WHEREAS, fresh water is the nation's and Canada's most important resource and should be protected and managed prudently; and

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes are an irreplaceable natural resource, containing twenty one percent of the worlds, and ninety five percent of North America's fresh water, vital to human and environmental health and economic and agricultural well-being of both Canada and the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, Lake Michigan and Lake Huron are hydrologically connected as one continuous water body and any contamination resulting from a leaking nuclear waste repository located on Lake Huron could affect Lake Michigan's waters, the source of drinking water for almost 7 million residents of 11 northeastern Illinois counties (Boone, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will); and

WHEREAS, Lake Huron and connecting waters including Lake St. Clair, are a source of drinking water for millions of people downstream in Canada, the United States of America and First Nations; and

WHEREAS, individuals, citizen and environmental groups and municipalities and counties in both Canada and the United States have expressed concern and opposition to the proposed nuclear waste repository; and

WHEREAS, as of September 22, 2014, one hundred thirty three (133) resolutions have been passed by communities in the States of Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio and Indiana and in the Province of Ontario representing 11 million citizens opposing the proposed nuclear waste repository, with the vast majority of the resolutions opposing any permanent underground nuclear waste repository anywhere in the Great Lakes Basin; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Senate has expressed serious concern for the failure of the siting process in Ontario for the proposed OPG DGR to fully account for all potential impacts of the proposed facility by passing a legislative package urging intervention by the Great Lakes Commission, the International Joint Commission and a special legislatively created advisory board. SB 948, SCR 16, SCR 17, SR 150 and SR 151 all have been passed unanimously by the Michigan Senate; and

WHEREAS, under the *2012 Protocol Amending the Agreement Between Canada and the United States of America on Great Lakes Water Quality*, the governments of Canada and the United States acknowledge the importance of anticipating, preventing and responding to threats to the waters of the Great Lakes; and

WHEREAS, the Governments of Canada and of the United States share a responsibility and an obligation to protect the Great Lakes from contamination from various sources of pollution, including the leakage of nuclear waste from an underground nuclear waste repository; and

WHEREAS, in September 2014 resolutions HR 716 and SR 565 have been introduced respectively in the US House of Representatives and US Senate expressing the sense that (1) the Canadian Government should not allow a permanent nuclear waste repository to be built within the Great Lakes Basin; (2) the President and the Secretary of State should take appropriate action to work with the Canadian Government to prevent a permanent nuclear waste repository from being built within the Great Lakes Basin; and (3) the President and the Secretary of State should work together with their Canadian Government counterparts on a safe and responsible solution for the long-term storage of nuclear waste; and

WHEREAS, placing a permanent nuclear waste burial facility so close to the Great Lakes is ill-advised. The potential damage to the Great Lakes from any leak or breach of radioactivity far outweighs any suggested economic benefit that might be derived from burying radioactive nuclear waste at this site. The ecology of the Great Lakes, valuable beyond measure to the health and economic well-being of the entire region, should not be placed at risk by storing radioactive nuclear waste underground so close to the shoreline.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that in order to protect the Great Lakes and its tributaries, the Board of Commissioners of Cook County urges that neither this proposed nuclear waste repository at the Bruce Nuclear Generating Station site nor any other underground nuclear waste repository be constructed in the Great Lakes Basin, in Canada, the United States, or any First Nation property; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County urges the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario to reject (and seek alternatives to) Ontario Power Generation's proposal to bury and abandon radioactive nuclear waste in the Great Lakes Basin; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Canada's Federal Minister of the Environment Leona Aglukkaq, President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the members of U.S. Congress representing Cook County, the Governor of the State of Illinois, the Attorney General of the State of Illinois, members of the Illinois House and Senate representing Cook County, northeastern Illinois county boards of Boone, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will, all Members of Ontario's Provincial Parliament and all Members of Canada's Parliament, and to the Joint Review Panel Deep Geological Repository for Low and Intermediate Level Radioactive Waste Case Reference Number 17520, c/o Panel Co-Manager, Ms. Debra Myles.