For Immediate Release, May 14, 2015

For comment contact:

Eugene Bourgeois, tel. (519) 368-5354
Brennain Lloyd, tel. (705) 497 0373, cell (705) 493 9650
Kevin Kamps, Beyond Nuclear, tel. (240) 462-3216

100 Groups Issue Open Letter to Government of Ontario:
Canadian Federal Report on Great Lakes Nuke Dump is Flawed,
Province of Ontario Must Take Action

Queens Park, Toronto - Calling the federal review report issued last week on a proposal to bury nuclear waste beside Lake Huron “deeply flawed”, one hundred public interest groups have issued an “Open Letter to the Government of Ontario”, calling on the Province to step up in light of a failed and flawed federal process. [A link to the Open Letter is posted online at http://www.beyondnuclear.org/canada/]

The letter calls on the Government of Ontario, as the sole shareholder of Ontario Power Generation, to direct the provincial utility to withdraw its proposal to bury hundreds of thousands of cubic metres of radioactive waste in limestone caverns beside Lake Huron, beneath the Bruce Nuclear Site. Ontario Power Generation is the proponent of the burial scheme.

Last week, a panel appointed by the federal Minister of the Environment and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission in 2012 provided the Minister with its final report on the review of Ontario Power Generation’s proposed Deep Geologic Repository for Low and Intermediate Level Radioactive Wastes. The Joint Review Panel (JRP) recommended that the federal minister approve the proposed repository, despite the expert evidence they heard throughout the public hearings about numerous technical uncertainties, and an incomplete plan. The proposal faces large and growing public opposition.

“They got it wrong - plain and simple” commented Eugene Bourgeois, closest neighbour to the Bruce Nuclear site.

“There are layers on layers of dishonesty at play here. This federal panel has now teamed up with the nuclear industry to rush ahead with unproven technologies to bury wastes OPG claims are being safely managed where they are, and to continue to ignore some of the most vulnerable and most hazardous wastes, like AECL’s shut-down reactor at Douglas Point.”

Ontario Power Generation’s proposal was to bury 200,000 cubic metres of low and intermediate level radioactive wastes produced during reactor operations deep underground in a series of underground caverns carved out of limestone. Weeks before the federal hearing began in September 2013, OPG publicly acknowledged its intention to double that amount by adding decommissioning wastes - including radioactive reactor components and contaminated building materials and rubble - through a license amendment after approval based on the initial proposal has been issued.

“The Joint Review Panel got one thing right: they named OPG’s proposed burial plan as “precedent-setting” and described it as “likely ... to assist” in the push to bury high level nuclear waste. We’ve always seen this project as the nuclear industry’s trial balloon for nuclear waste burial”, said Brennain Lloyd, a spokesperson with Northwatch.

Ontario Power Generation also holds majority control in the Nuclear Waste Management Organization, an association of provincial utilities in Canada who operate nuclear reactors. The NWMO is currently investigating nine communities as potential burial sites for high level nuclear fuel waste, including 6 in northern Ontario and three in the vicinity of the Bruce nuclear site.

“These wastes have to be isolated from the environment for hundreds of thousands of years; burying them in limestone right beside Lake Huron simply makes no sense”, said Kevin Kamps, a radioactive waste specialist with U.S. based group Beyond Nuclear.

“One way Power Generation’s experts during the hearing talked about Lake Huron being large enough to dilute radioactive wastes that leaked from the repository. That a federal hearing panel would accept using the Great Lakes for the dilution of radioactive pollution as a solution to the industry’s waste management problems robs their report of any credibility.”

Saugeen Ojibway Nation, Anishnabek Nation and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative also released statements this week expressing their opposition to the project and concern with the Joint Review Panel’s conclusions.

- 30 -