

RADIOACTIVE WASTE POLICY REVIEW TIMELINE AND SYNOPSIS

- In 1996 the Radiative Waste Policy Framework was announced by Natural Resources Canada without any prior public consultation or opportunity for input
- An international review in 2019 found that Canada's radioactive waste policy should be reviewed
- In February 2020 the federal government Canada announced that it will "modernize" Canada's radioactive waste policy and consult with all Canadians
- In June 2020 Natural Resources Canada confirmed that "public engagement will be an integral part of the radioactive waste policy enhancement and strategy development"
- A review of Canada's radioactive waste policies was launched by Natural Resources Canada on November 16, 2020
- between January and May 2021 Natural Resources Canada held a number of roundtables and virtual sessions inviting comments on four discussion papers; the deadline for comments was May 31 2021
- Civil society's main messages included but were not limited to:
 - ♦ Canada needs an independent agency, arms-length from government and industry, to oversee radioactive waste management and decommissioning; the NWMO is not that agency.
 - ♦ Radioactive waste should NOT be abandoned; policy should direct perpetual care and monitoring Government and industry must be open and transparent in the management of radioactive waste and its transportation
 - ♦ Indigenous peoples and other Canadians have a right to access information, to engage in decision-making, and to know the risks.
 - ♦ Policy should explicitly prohibit the importing of radioactive waste from other countries.
 - ♦ Plutonium extraction (by reprocessing or pyro-processing) from radioactive fuel waste must be prohibited, due to environmental, security and proliferation issues.
- over six hundred comments were received on the policy, overwhelmingly calling for a massive reform of Canada's radioactive waste policies, practices and regulations
- In July 2021 Natural Resources Canada published the second of their summary reports on what they heard from the public throughout the review
- In September 2021 Nuclear Waste Watch provided Natural Resources Canada with preliminary feedback on NRCan's engagement summaries in a "What We Said" report
- February 1, 2022 Natural Resources Canada has released a draft of their revised radioactive waste policy and are inviting written feedback on the draft Policy for Radioactive Waste Management and Decommissioning during a public comment period of 60 days, from February 1, 2022 to April 2, 2022.
- Hundreds of Canadians commented on the draft policy
- Over 7,000 messages explicitly calling for a ban on reprocessing were received by NRCan
- A national collaborative public interest groups released "An Alternative Policy for Canada on Radioactive Waste Management and Decommissioning"; the Alternative Policy mirrors in order and content a draft policy released in February 2022 by Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) but integrates important changes to bring the policy in line with fundamental principles of transparency, safety and the public good.
- Civil society organizations urged Natural Resources Canada to release a second draft of the policy for public comment, given the gap between the first draft by NRCan and public expectations
- December 2022 Natural Resources Canada stated that the release of the final Radioactive Waste Policy would be delayed until 2023.
- March 27, 2023 Natural Resources Canada issued a statement that the policy would be released "in the coming days"