



RESPONSE TO PETITION RÉPONSE À LA PÉTITION

PREPARE IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH MARKING "ORIGINAL TEXT" OR "TRANSLATION"
PRÉPARER EN ANGLAIS ET EN FRANÇAIS EN INDIQUANT "TEXTE ORIGINAL" OU "TRADUCTION"

PETITION NO./N° DE LA PÉTITION
412-0614

BY / DE
Mr. Cash (Davenport)

DATE
December 9, 2013

RESPONSE BY THE MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES
RÉPONSE DU MINISTRE DES RESSOURCES NATURELLES

Kelly Block, M.P.

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY
INSCRIRE LE NOM DU SIGNATAIRE

SIGNATURE
MINISTER OR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
MINISTRE OU SECRÉTAIRE PARLEMENTAIRE

SUBJECT / OBJET

Nuclear Industry (GE Hitachi)

RESPONSE / RÉPONSE

ORIGINAL TEXT
TEXTE ORIGINAL



TRANSLATION
TRADUCTION



GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy Canada (GEH-C) has safely operated a uranium fuel processing facility at 1025 Lansdowne Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, for over 50 years. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) is an independent quasi-judicial administrative tribunal that bases its decisions on facts and science and issues licences only if fully satisfied that the facility poses no threat to the health and safety of Canadians. The CNSC renewed GEH-C's operating licence in 2010 for a 10-year term after a public hearing and on the basis of GEH-C's positive compliance history as well as the maturity of its health and safety programs.

In late 2012, as a result of misleading information about the safety of the facility, community residents and local elected officials began expressing concerns regarding this nuclear fuel processing facility in their community. At the request of Mr. Cash, MP (Davenport), and others, the CNSC held a public Commission meeting in Toronto, Ontario, on December 10 and 11, 2013. Many intervenors questioned the safety and oversight of the nuclear fuel processing facility. The results of separate and independent reports for soil sampling prepared by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and the CNSC were presented at the meeting. These reports issued by different government agencies each clearly demonstrated that there are no health risks associated with uranium in soil as a result of the operations of the GEH-C facility. To emphasize the safety of the facility, the representative for the Ontario Ministry of the Environment clearly stated that there was no evidence that air emissions from the GEH-C facility have a measurable impact on the residential community itself, and that, because of this, the Ministry had no further need for future soil sampling. Toronto Public Health, who was also in attendance at the meeting, clearly stated that they have no concerns with the operation of GEH-C based on their annual review of GEH-C's environmental monitoring reports.

The meetings were held in Toronto to engage the community in an open and respectful dialogue and to allow it to participate and learn about the operating performance of the facility. While there was significant participation by the public with 82 intervenors over two days expressing their views and questions, the Commission's legitimate attempt to address the community's concerns was disrupted by individuals living outside the community. These individuals chose to interrupt the proceedings by interjecting during other presentations, and intimidating those who did not share their views – to the point where some participants, including staff from the CNSC and GEH-C felt threatened. Unfortunately, the Commission was forced to adjourn the meeting early due to the disruptions that prevented any orderly discussion, and as a result, not all residents and intervenors had the opportunity to present their views. The webcast showing the two days of meetings, including the disruptions, and the abrupt adjournment is available for viewing on the CNSC's website.

As the nuclear regulator, the CNSC regulates the use of nuclear energy and materials to protect the health, safety and security of Canadians and the environment, and to implement Canada's international commitments on the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The CNSC is also responsible for the dissemination of objective scientific, technical and regulatory information to the public and the effects, on the environment and on the health and safety of persons, of the development, production and use of nuclear energy. Through the conduct of public meetings and the reports that it prepares and publishes, the Commission is fulfilling that objective. Moreover, over the last year, at the request of the CNSC, GEH-C facility has improved its public information program, making more information available to residents. The CNSC is satisfied with the public information program and will continue to monitor its implementation.

In conclusion, the CNSC continues to be fully satisfied that the GEH-C facility is safe and complies with regulatory requirements. Three separate government agencies (Ontario Ministry of Environment, Toronto Public Health and the CNSC) all conclude that the facility is safe. The CNSC will continue its regulatory compliance and oversight of the facility, including annual performance reports to the Commission, which will be presented publicly.