



**Written submission from  
Philip Kompass**

**Mémoire de  
Philip Kompass**

In the Matter of the

À l'égard des

**Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL)**

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**Laboratoires Nucléaires Canadiens (LNC)**

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Application from the CNL to amend its Chalk River Laboratories site licence to authorize the construction of a near surface disposal facility

Demande des LNC visant à modifier le permis du site des Laboratoires de Chalk River pour autoriser la construction d'une installation de gestion des déchets près de la surface

**Commission Public Hearing  
Part 2**

**Audience publique de la Commission  
Partie 2**

**May and June 2022**

**Mai et juin 2022**

Senior Tribunal Officer, Secretariat  
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission  
280 Slater Street P.O. Box 1046, Station B  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5S9

2022 April 8

***Subject: Canadian Nuclear Laboratories' application to amend its Chalk River Laboratories site licence to authorize the construction of a near surface disposal facility IAA Reference Number: 80122***

Dear Secretariat:

Good day.

I appreciate you providing the public the opportunity to intervene in the nuclear facility licencing process. Please accept this letter of support for Canadian Nuclear Laboratories' application to build a Near Surface Disposal Facility at Chalk River Laboratories (IAA Reference Number: 80122).

My name is Philip Kompass. I am a long-time resident of the Ottawa Valley, with a home near the Ottawa and Petawawa Rivers in the Town of Petawawa. I am a husband and father to three children. I am employed by Canadian Nuclear Laboratories, and have served in the Corporate Communications department at the Chalk River Laboratories for the past 16 years.

To ensure I am being fully transparent, while I may have indirectly supported communications and engagement activities about the NSDF project on occasion, this project has never been part of my primary work portfolio.

Chalk River Laboratories plays an important role in Canada's science infrastructure. It is a hub of science that directly contributes to the health of our environment, advances sustainable energy solutions for the future, and serves to inspire and develop the next generation of Canadian scientists. This work is essential and must continue as we tackle the challenges of today and tomorrow.

It is my view that the NSDF facility is the right solution - the responsible solution – to safely address the low-level legacy wastes currently present at the site, as well as those that will be generated through the continued operation of the campus into the future.

I am not a scientist or engineer. I do not profess to hold any significant technical aptitude in waste management or nuclear science, but given my years of experience working in the nuclear sector, I feel I have an above-average knowledge of nuclear issues. In a corresponding fashion, given my time spent in communications and public relations, I have an above-average understanding of the challenges related to engagement with the public on nuclear issues.

It is along these themes that I have elected to submit my intervention regarding the Near Surface Disposal Facility proposed for the Chalk River Laboratories site.

As you may well appreciate, nuclear in general is a polarizing topic; you will find a vocal minority in opposition to nuclear-related projects, a vocal minority in strong support, and a large majority of whom tend to hold a neutral position. Perhaps as testament to AECL and CNL's ongoing care and attention, many residents in our local communities were not aware of the need for a facility such as the NSDF. This neutral majority is not interested in nuclear waste management and has no desire to 'tune in' despite the efforts of all parties. There was never any need to be concerned, as the environmental remediation teams have been responsibly managing these waste and environmental issues. Stakeholder engagement is a difficult task at the best of time. Getting the attention of a busy public is never easy, let alone maintaining that attention for years as the project advances, on a solution to a problem they didn't know existed.

Communications and outreach regarding the Near Surface Disposal Facility began roughly six years ago. Over that time I have personally watched the teams within AECL and CNL work very hard, even prior to the launch of the environmental assessment (EA) process, to ensure that local residents and interested stakeholders have had an opportunity to learn about the project, ask questions, and build their knowledge and understanding about every potential component of the NSDF. From the early days explaining the need for a solution, right through to the thousands of pages of technical details analyzed in countless documents, the team has remained positive, open and proactive in seeking to engage with anyone with an interest.

The communications teams at CNL have left no stone unturned, and no opportunity behind in their efforts to connect with the public on this project. From countless in-person information sessions in communities across the Ottawa Valley and beyond, to individual one-on-one meetings with any individual with questions or concerns. Does the member of the public work through the day? The team introduced a series of evening webinars. Is the daytime more convenient? Breakfast and lunch sessions were scheduled. Want to engage on your own time? The website was built and maintained, with comprehensive documents (at a range of technical levels) as well as video recordings to delve into the details. The team stood behind tables at the mall, set up signage in community halls, put up posters, lawn signs and billboards, ran ads in the local paper, mailed out inserts, built and maintained email lists, attended citizens groups, council meetings, media inquiries, site walk downs ... and much, much more.

Overall, I believe the CNL team explored every reasonable avenue to create opportunities for engagement with residents from as far away as Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa, St Lawrence Region, and of course, closer to home in the Upper Ottawa Valley.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, CNL's Stakeholder Relations group was again challenged to find ways to make themselves available, and ensure that information about the NSDF project was reaching the public. The team didn't miss a beat, immediately pivoting to online and digital solutions. The frequency of the webinars, which were broadcast in both official languages and featured question and answer portions, increased. The team launched 'virtual visitor centres' to make the project even more accessible; these included 'chat support' from the subject matter experts. Social media posts increased, as did other forms of digital engagement. As the licencing drew closer, the team made individual efforts to connect directly with critics and concerned citizens to ensure that the facts were being provided, and questions being answered.

It is my view that the stakeholder engagement work done by CNL in support of the Environmental Assessment for the NSDF project far exceeded what is reasonably expected by proponents. In fact, the evidence of this can be seen through the area with banners and signage in front yards, Council motions passed, positive intervention submissions, and names added to petitions. CNL has truly done a remarkable job despite the many challenges, and should be commended for the monumental effort they have delivered over the past years.

They should also be commended for what they have endured.

Throughout the Environmental Assessment period, CNL has been striving to provide fair, accessible, science-informed information, while being “shouted down” by a vocal minority who sought to ‘win’ the battle over NSDF. These few individuals have, at times, frightened people with misleading terminology, inaccurate information, and vitriolic comments targeting those who indicate anything other than unwavering objection to the project. These behaviors are disrespectful personally to those working on the project and professionally to CNL as the proponent. These behaviours run counter to the Environmental Assessment process, have added unnecessary delays and costs to the parties involved (including the CNSC), and most critically, have done a disservice to those residents and individuals who have an honest interest in the clean-up, management and environmental remediation enabled by this project.

Individuals who declare their support for this project – myself included – have had their integrity called into question, and even faced some very personal attacks and accusations, particularly online. In the face of this behaviour, I think it is important to commend the NSDF team, who have always sought to maintain a respectful, honest, science-informed discussion on this project. But I also want the CNSC to understand and appreciate that the voices you hear in support of this project represent countless others who are uncomfortable communicating their support because of these consequences, and who may have disengaged from the process entirely as a result.

I wish to add one final note regarding the team working to bring the NSDF project to life. The hundreds of staff involved in the project are experts in their field. They understand their work, they are consummate professionals, and they recognize the importance of ‘doing this right’. Many of these individuals are also local residents, just as I am. They too have families. They live and play right here in the Ottawa Valley and have a vested interest in ensuring that this solution is the right solution for our communities, our environment, and our families. There is no team better equipped to do this, no team more committed, and they have my unwavering support in delivery of this project.

Thank you for considering my comments.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip Kompass". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Philip Kompass