



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**November 28, 2024**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**WABIGOON LAKE OJIBWAY NATION**

### **NWMO to proceed with Site Characterization Process in Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation Territory**

Chief and Council of Lake Ojibway Nation (WLO) have issued this statement in response to the Nuclear Waste Management Organization's (NWMO) decision to proceed with the Site Characterization Process for the proposed Deep Geological Repository (DGR) in WLO's traditional territory. For over a decade, Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation has been involved in discussions and information sharing through a "Learn More Agreement" with the NWMO that has enabled WLO's members and leadership to thoroughly examine what potentially hosting a DGR could mean not only to our Nation, but to all of Canada.

Chief Clayton Wetelainen announced: "We acknowledge the NWMO site selection decision, and we look forward to continuing to work closely as this project enters the regulatory assessment phase. WLO views our role as the potential host for Canada's used nuclear fuel as one of the most important responsibilities of our time. We can not ignore this challenge and allow it to become a burden for future generations. Our membership spoke with a clear voice in our willingness decision that we have the bravery and courage to continue to the next phase of this project."

WLO's Chief and Council also issued the following statement: "It's been a long road to this point, and in many ways, the journey has just begun. We will continue to work closely with the NWMO to ensure that our role as the guardians of our land and water remains central to the decision-making process. This project can only continue if it can be proven that it will be built safely, with respect to the environment and in a manner that protects Anishnaabe values."

Now that NWMO has rendered their site selection decision, the project will begin what is likely to be the largest and most strenuous impact assessment in Canadian history. The project will be subject to a rigorous regulatory process as set out by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC). In addition, the project will be subject to a determination from WLO's Sovereign regulatory decision-making process: the WLO Regulatory Assessment and Approval Process (WLO-RAAP). Chief Wetelainen added that: "The WLO-RAAP asserts our Sovereign rights while protecting our Anishnaabe Values and Laws. This project will be under intense scrutiny by our Nation's regulatory process in addition to the regulatory oversight by IAAC and the CNSC. Wabigoon will ensure that safety, environmental protection and Anishnaabe values are upheld throughout this process."

*For more information:*

Michael J. Nadel

**Media Enquiries**

[mnadel@wlon-apm.org](mailto:mnadel@wlon-apm.org)

416-786-1318

#### **About Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation**

Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation (WLO) is a proud, progressive and resilient nation with strong roots in our Anishnaabe culture and the history of our people. Our community of approximately 1100 Manomin People have a strong cultural identity rooted in the seasonal rhythms of the sacred plant as designed by Creator. As Anishnaabe, we view the land not simply as a resource but as alive and imbued with Spirit, just as all living beings are. The relationship between the Anishnaabe and Aki (Earth) is deeply spiritual and forms the foundation of Anishnaabe laws and governance. Every action we take on Aki, whether it's harvesting wild rice, fishing, or using stones to build, must be done with respect for the Spirit of the land and the those who share it with us. We are not only caretakers of the land for ourselves but for all inhabitants and for all generations to come. [www.wlon.org](http://www.wlon.org)