

Framework to guide Policy for Management of Radioactive Waste in Canada

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT (Based on International Atomic Energy Agency principles)

Principle 1: Stop the production of new radioactive waste. Phase out current nuclear waste production. Develop other energy sources.

Principle 2: Protect human health. Manage radioactive waste to protect human health, now and in the future. Protect the wider population as well as workers closely involved in the nuclear industry.

Principle 3: Protect the environment. Manage radioactive waste to protect the immediate environs of nuclear plants as well as areas beyond that space which may be affected by movement of water or land. To that end, radioactive waste must not be stored close to water, on fractured rock or on seismically active land. Consideration must be given to all life forms which might be affected by radioactive contamination.

Principle 4: Protect areas beyond national borders. Radioactive waste should not be exported to other countries. The rights of indigenous nations within their territories must be respected.

Article 29(2) of the UNDRIP states that “States shall take effective measures to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous materials shall take place in the lands or territories of Indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent.”

Principle 5: Protect present and future generations. Create and maintain publicly accessible inventories of radioactive waste which are updated regularly. Create a classification system for radioactive waste. Wastes should be defined, classified by their longevity and hazard. Develop secure packaging, with careful labelling, to isolate radioactive waste from the biosphere.

Principle 6: Protect decision making. Create a transparent national radioactive waste regulatory agency, which is not dominated by nuclear industry partners, and which is accountable to Parliament.

Principle 7: Protect transportation routes. Create and enforce laws and bylaws to govern the transport of radioactive waste across jurisdictions, guided by IAEA SSR-6.

Principle 8: Protect existent radioactive waste. Build above-ground concrete buildings, shielded or unshielded as necessary; design shallow underground facilities; and develop deep underground facilities in stable rock. The contents of these facilities should be clearly signposted, with appropriate warnings and directions for further information.

Principle 9: Protect and enforce existing laws beyond the polluter pays principle.