

# CNL takes next step towards new Chalk River waste site

BY TERRY MYERS

Canadian Nuclear Laboratories has taken the next step towards the eventual construction of a major low-level waste site at the Chalk River labs.

CNL announced last week that it has submitted a revised draft “environmental impact statement” (EIS) for the proposed Near Surface Disposal Facility (NSDF).

The EIS was originally submitted to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission in early 2017.

CNL has been working for two years to address hundreds of comments on its initial proposal.

In a statement on the company’s website, CNL says it identified six main “themes” where changes in the project or more information were necessary.

Those areas include the waste “inventory,” protection of the Ottawa River, design and engineering, long-term accountability, alternatives to the proposed site, and “environmental events” like earthquakes, floods and tornadoes.

The company says the NSDF is a “key element in the clean-up mission of Chalk River Laboratories – providing a safe place to dispose of low-level waste from this work.”

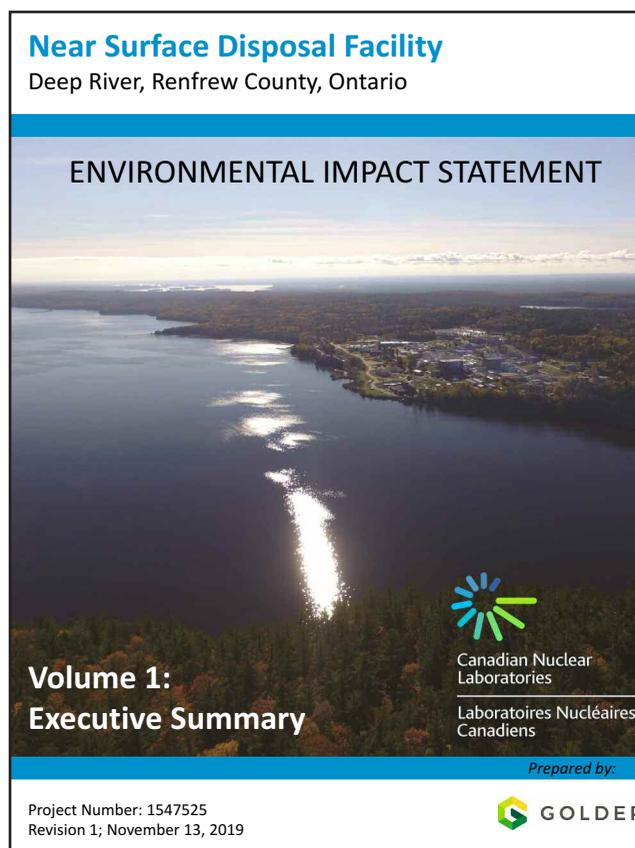
“First and foremost the NSDF is an environmental remediation project. The government of Canada has made a commitment to clean up historical radioactive waste around the country. This includes waste from a variety of sources: nuclear research facilities, shut-down nuclear reactor sites, uranium mines and even old radium watch factories.

“This project, providing a safe way to dispose of low level radioactive waste, will go a long way to making that happen,” CNL says.

The NSDF will be an “engineered containment mound” designed to take both legacy wastes from the Chalk River site as well as waste from current decommissioning efforts.

The facility would be located on the east side of the CNL property, near Perch Lake and less than a kilometre from the Ottawa River.

The site would receive up to 1 million cubic metres of radioactive waste over an operating life of about 50 years



beginning in 2024.

The site would be closed over a period of about 30 years, and then monitored for another 300.

CNL says that while it is “proposing to build and operate this project,” the NSDF “will be paid for by the government of Canada, and overseen by the federal government, through the Crown corporation Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, and will only go ahead if approved by the federal regulator, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.”

In the executive summary of the revised EIS, CNL says that with all factors taken into account, the company believes that the NSDF project “is not likely to result in significant residual adverse effects” on the environment.

“All predicted effects for human health are well below

regulatory criteria during the life of the NSDF project, including post-closure,” the company says.

But opponents of the project say “no amount of tweaking” can make the NSDF and plans for the former NPD reactor at Rolphton “meet international safety standards.”

“These proposals violate the principle that radioactive waste must be kept out of contact with the biosphere for as long as it remains radioactive,” according to Ole Hendrickson, a scientist and researcher for the group Concerned Citizens of Renfrew County and Area.

“The (NSDF) mound and the (NPD) tomb are the wrong strategies; they simply can’t do the job of keeping radioactive toxins out of our air and drinking water.”

## “QUICK AND DIRTY”

Critics are calling on the federal government to cancel these “quick-and-dirty radioactive dumps” and step up with funding to support world class radioactive waste storage facilities for Canada’s \$8 to \$10 billion nuclear waste legacy.

“Radioactive wastes should never be abandoned right beside major water bodies,” said Gordon Edwards, president of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility. “They should be maintained in a monitored and retrievable fashion so that future generations can cope with them.

“These wastes will be hazardous and radioactive for more than 100,000 years, essentially for eternity. They must be carefully packaged and labelled and stored securely, well away from drinking water sources.”

But the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has already responded to such fears, saying it will not allow CNL to build the NSDF if it does not believe it will be safe for people and the environment.

In an open letter last year, the CNSC said that’s not just a professional commitment, it’s personal too.

“As Canada’s independent nuclear regulator, the CNSC is committed to protecting health, safety, security and the environment.

“CNSC staff also live and work in communities along the Ottawa River, and have not only a professional regulatory obligation related to the project, but also a personal interest in ensuring safety.

“The CNSC will review and assess CNL’s proposal thoroughly, and will only allow the project to proceed if it is convinced that it is safe for the public and the environment.”

In its latest statement, CNL echoes the CNSC comments.

“CNL employees live along and utilize the Ottawa River and its protection is as important to us as it is to you,” the company says.

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**Holiday Hours**

**Changes to Senior Delivery**  
for the remainder of the year:  
For the next 2 weeks  
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Monday afternoon.

Sunday Dec 22 8am-6pm  
Monday Dec 23 8am-9pm  
Tuesday Dec 24 8am-5pm  
**Wednesday Dec 25 CLOSED**  
**Thursday Dec 26 CLOSED**  
Friday Dec 27 8am-9pm  
Saturday Dec 28 8am-6pm  
Sunday Dec 29 8am-6pm  
Monday Dec 30 8am-9pm  
Tuesday Dec 31 8am-6pm  
**Wednesday Jan 1 CLOSED**  
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## Hospital gets top marks

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“We voluntarily participate in accreditation so we can learn what we are doing well, and where improvements are needed.”

“We are proud of the ways in which we are making our organization safer for patients, residents, and staff,” added Janna Hotson, chief nursing executive.

“Collaboration and teamwork have led to vast improvements since our last survey.

“Accreditation is a quality improvement journey, and our team will continue working to advance quality, safety, and person-centred care.”

The hospital said it looks forward to celebrating this achievement and sharing the full report publicly through its website, <drdh.org>, early in the New Year.

The accreditation results are another feather in the cap for the local health care facility.

The hospital announced earlier this fall that it continues to earn high scores when it comes to levels of patient satisfaction, well above the averages for the province and the Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN).

### RECOMMEND

Standardized surveys distributed by the National Research Corporation Health (NRC Health) showed that nearly 90 per cent of patients “would recommend” DRDH in 2018-19, compared to the provincial average where only 65 per cent of people “would recommend” the hospital they visited.

For patients across the Champlain LHIN, 74 per cent “would recommend” the hospital they visited.

Further, DRDH received an “overall rating” score of 73 per cent, compared to the provincial average of 55 per cent, and the Champlain LHIN average of 62 per cent.

Both the “would recommend” and “overall rating” scores for 2018-19 were similar to the high scores received over the last several years.

“Measuring our patients’ and residents’ experience in the health care system is enormously important to us,” Bedard said at the time.

“Listening to patients, residents, and their families is one of the most vital ways we can better understand their needs and preferences, and helps us to ensure care is provided to every person like a loved one.”

## CNL takes next step

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“We are taking the time to ensure the design of the facility is robust enough to contain the waste under all contemplated environmental conditions.”

As far as concerns that the NSDF site may be affected in future by flooding on the Ottawa River like that experienced this spring, CNL says that is not possible.

“The base of the proposed NSDF is located approximately 163 metres above sea level, which is approximately 50 metres above the current water levels of the Ottawa River.

“Local residents can be assured that the proposed site is situated well outside of a flood plain.

“The Ottawa River posed no flooding threat to the Chalk River Laboratories site or its operations during the 2019 high-water conditions, nor would it have impacted the NSDF.”

While CNL has submitted a revised draft of the EIS, there is still a long way to go before the NSDF is approved. In its update, CNL says it expects to submit its final impact statement and formal responses to public comments next spring.

A first CNSC commission hearing would tentatively be held in the fall of 2020, with an opportunity for more public comments 30 days before a final hearing later that winter. If all goes well, approval for the project may be granted in the spring of 2021.

For their part, the CNSC says it has “received the revised draft” from CNL.

“We are looking at it to ensure all elements in the submission are in place. Stay tuned for updates!”

## Point of view: meaningful

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More broadly, Wilkes said, poorer teen relationships with parents, relatives and friends may have combined with cultural shifts to greater materialism and narcissism. Learning delayed gratification is at risk of being lost.

Exposure to social media has an adverse effect on “knowing yourself.”

During the August long weekend I met up with a young man who was biking solo across Canada. He started out in Vancouver and was heading for Gaspé Bay. He was from France and studying at university in Montreal. He was planning to immigrate to Canada.

I had to ask the question: Why are you doing this? His reply was twofold. To see Canada, to help decide where to live.

His second reason gave wording to something I had been trying to express for some time. “To get to know myself.”

Is that the void in the lives of today’s youth? As adults we more and more deny them the opportunity through instant gratification, we deny them the time to listen to our experience because of our busy lifestyle in front of a screen of some sort.

“Yourself” is found on social media, just pick one you would like to be or someone will help you decide.

Getting to know yourself has to be taught in school and learned in life. Alas, it doesn’t seem as sexy as e-courses where a student learns in isolation and escapes conflict with the teacher and other students. Politicians love the idea. Fewer teachers, less infrastructure, saves money.

And the number of young adults with mental health problems will continue to increase. They will have been denied the opportunity to know themselves and will take on any identity offered on screen or by the local bully or professed racist.



# Christmas HOURS OF OPERATION

<p><b>James J Hickey Realty LTD</b> 613-584-3377 • jamesjhipkey.ca Tues Dec 24 ... 9am - 2pm Thurs Dec 26 ... closed Tues Dec 31 ... 9am - 2pm</p>	<p><b>Petawawa Toyota</b> 613-735-1717 • petawawa-toyota.com Tues Dec 24 ... closed Thurs Dec 26 ... closed Tues Dec 31 ... closed</p>	<p><b>Rx Drugmart</b> 584-2501 • 11 Champlain St Tues Dec 24 ... 9am - 6pm Thurs Dec 26 ... 10am - 6pm Tues Dec 31 ... 9am - 6pm</p>
<p><b>Donna Watt, Desjardins</b> 613-584-3331 • 12 Glendale Ave Mon Tues Dec 24 ... closed at noon Thurs Dec 26 ... closed Tues Dec 31 ... closed at noon</p>	<p><b>Jan's valumart</b> 613-584-3893 Tues Dec 24 ... 8am - 5pm Thurs Dec 26 ... Closed Tues Dec 31 ... 8am - 6pm</p>	<p><b>Pembroke Mall</b> 613-735-0600 • pembrokemall.ca Tues Dec 24 ... 9:30am - 5pm Wed Dec 26 ... 10am - 5pm Tues Dec 31 ... 9:30am - 5pm</p>
<p><b>The Bear's Den</b> 5 Hwy 17 • 613-584-9795 Tues Dec 24 ... 5am - 6pm Thurs Dec 26 ... 7am - 9pm Tues Dec 31 ... 5am - 9pm</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Closed Christmas Day Open NY Day 7am - 9pm</p>	<p><b>Thomas E. Roche Law Office</b> Deep River 613-584-3392 Petawawa 613-687-2223 Closed Monday Dec 23 until Wednesday, Jan 1</p>	<p><b>Valley Artisans Co-op</b> 613-584-4483 • valleyartisans.com Open daily 10am-5:30pm Closed Christmas Day &amp; New Year's Day</p>
<p><b>Canadian Tire</b> 613-584-3337 • 33277 HWY 17 Tues Dec 24 ... 8am - 5pm Thurs Dec 26 ... 8am - 5pm, no returns Tues Dec 31 ... 8am - 5pm</p>	<p><b>Everitt's NAPA Autopro</b> 613-584-2270 • Hwy 17W Closed Wednesday, Dec 25 through Wednesday, Jan 1 Open January 2</p>	<p><b>Elaine's Styles &amp; Smiles</b> 613-584-9715 • 1 Champlain St. Tues Dec 24 ... 9am - 5pm Thurs Dec 26 ... closed Tues Dec 31 ... 9am - 5pm</p>
<p><b>North Renfrew Times</b> nrt@magma.ca • 584-4161 Dec 20 - 26 ... closed Tues Dec 31 ... 9:30am - 12:30pm Deadline for Dec 31 paper 1pm, Friday, Dec 27</p>	<p><b>Scott's Shoe Store</b> 613-631-0700 Mews Mall, 143 Pembroke St W Tues Dec 24 ... 10am - 4pm Thurs Dec 26 ... closed Tues Dec 31 ... 10am - 4pm</p>	<p><b>Neville Funeral Home</b> nevillefuneralhome.ca 613-732-7481 Dec 24, 25, 26 ... closed Dec 27, 28 ... 11am - 4pm Tues Dec 31 ... 11am - 4pm</p>

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