Dear editor

Re: my response to the letter to editor on…... Fuel Storage in Bruce County

The statement “that Bruce County and area has not only enjoyed the supply of efficient carbon free production of electricity “is false”. The Canadian Nuclear Association recently released a report called Factbook 2020 and on page 23 the report states:

“All forms of electricity production generate some level of CO2 and other greenhouse gases (GHG), even if they do not burn fossil fuels. The construction of the plant or equipment, for example, requires cement production and vehicle use, each having its own carbon footprint. When considering the entire power generation lifecycle, including construction, mining, operation and decommissioning, nuclear comes out as one of the cleanest technologies available. Hydro is a low-carbon source of electricity, but it is only feasible in locations with access to large quantities of flowing water. Solar and wind are low-carbon sources of electricity as well, but to power a grid they would require backup sources about 80% of the time. Backup most often comes from burning natural gas, which increases CO2 emissions greatly.”

However, nuclear is not the cleanest source as a chart on the same page shows that the level of CO2 produced by generators of electricity; Hydro facilities at 4 G/KWH, Wind turbines at 12 G/KWH and Nuclear at 4 times Hydro at 16 G/KWH. The Nuclear number above does not include the carbon emissions that will be created with the construction effort for a DGR and the emissions from trucking of nuclear waste to the DGR. Nuclear is not “Carbon Free” as stated in the letter. The source for this information is the Canadian Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change “Renewable Energy Source and Climate Change “2011 pp 190.

 Another chart on the following page of the Factbook 2020 highlights that the cost of energy in Ontario in 2018 shows that Hydro costs were 19% cheaper than Nuclear.

I agree that the NWMO has only one mandate and that is to find a compelling willing host community to bury this highly radioactive waste in a DGR. The approach being taken by the NWMO is to provide monies to communities who support the undertaking and to produce scientific and other information that helps the NWMO achieve their objective but may not necessarily align with the desires of the residents of the community.

There are many examples where the NWMO has provided less than complete answers to questions or provided information that conflicts with other sources. One such example occurred at a recent SB CLC meeting where a NWMO presenter stated the incident that happened at WIPP DGR in 2014 was caused by a lid popping off a drum containing radioactive material which resulted in this material being released into the environment. In fact, several reports produced by various USA agencies concluded that there was a drum rupture caused by a build up of gas from a chemical reaction within the drum that blew the lid off the drum containing the radioactive material. The WIPP site was shut down nearly three years to clean up the mess and to make corrections to their daily operation. The same individual claimed that only one DGR (WIPP) existed while other scientific experts concluded 3 such DGRs exist and that they have all failed or had incidents. The 2 incidents at WIPP were both caused by human failure which is difficult to predict or impossible to factor into any Scientific study/research or computer model.

Other examples of conflicting information being provided by the NWMO is in their response to a question on the SB CLC web site regarding the potential stigma that may be caused as a result of having a DGR in our community. NWMO answer was “a preliminary review of literature suggests that a project as this one may in fact increase property values and enhance tourism rather than have a detrimental effect”. Meanwhile a quote in the press by our Mayor states that property values may decrease in the surrounding area. Who are we to believe, our Mayor, who has the interest of the community residents or an organization whose business objectives are not necessarily aligned with that of the residents of the area? I agree with our mayor!

We would appreciate if SB CLC team, would obtain answers to a couple of questions as part of our “learning” experience. Namely, what is the definition of a “compelling willing host community”. How will it be determined that the community is a willing host? Will this be determined by South Bruce council, the residents, or the NWMO? Recently in Kincardine the NWMO used a survey as a measure for determining if the community was a willing host. The issue with surveys is that the questions being asked are determined by an organization that is seeking a certain outcome. If such an approach is being contemplated for South Bruce maybe the SB CLC should insist that one of the questions produces a yes or no answer and therefore not be open to interpretation. My suggestion for such a question is…” Are you interested in your community hosting a DGR for highly nuclear radioactive material (spent fuel)? yes or no.”

Contrary to the viewpoint expressed in the letter to the editor, the Internet is a great opportunity to learn about both sides of a proposal or debate. Receiving information on a proposal or an opportunity from only one source in my opinion is not a good learning experience. To fully comprehend a proposal one must investigate many conditions ..the cons, risks, benefits, and pros of the situation. The DGR proposal is not only about the science of such an undertaking but there are many other factors to consider such as the social-economical impacts.

Also implied in the letter is that the group of concerned residents actively seeking the opinions of our neighbours in South Bruce is anti-nuclear. For this group this is not the case as we all understand the values the nuclear industry has created. However, we are not in favor of changing the lifestyle of our community by hosting a DGR. We are against hosting a DGR in South Bruce which has little to do with the question of supporting the nuclear industry.

 I do not share the claim that our generation has a responsibility to deal with the safe storage of nuclear waste produced. My view is that our generation did not ask for the nuclear energy to be the vehicle to produce electricity. We as citizens did not create this hazardous waste material and are not responsible to solve a problem created by the nuclear industry. The nuclear industry misleads us all when they failed to identify or acknowledge the major issue with nuclear spent fuel at the outset. For more than 50 years this industry and their scientists have failed to produce an engineering solution for eliminating or reducing the impact of radioactive waste material. The best solution they have arrived at is to bury it in the ground and hope that our future generations do not have to solve a major catastrophe our generation allowed to happen.

Where can one find a business plan, a financial study, a strategic plan or any information produced by the South Bruce municipality that provides details of the claims of economic growth, huge local employment and just be a great opportunity for our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren as residents of Teeswater and South Bruce community?

Bill Noll