

June 24, 2004

M. Brennian Lloyd
Northwatch
PO Box 282
North Bay, Ontario
P1B 8H2

Dear Brennian Lloyd:

Enclosed, please find the Liberal Party response to your questionnaire.

In addition to the response to your questionnaire, you might also wish to consult the Liberal Party of Canada web site at www.liberal.ca to review our platform, *Moving Canada Forward*. This document provides details on Liberal goals and priorities – objectives which reflect the values and needs of Canadians at the beginning of a promising new century.

On behalf of our leader, the Right Honourable Paul Martin, thank you for writing to identify the major concerns of your membership. Your interest in the policies of the Liberal Party as they relate to these issues is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Eizenga". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mike Eizenga
President
Liberal Party of Canada

A Liberal Response to the Northwatch Election 2004 Questionnaire

1. Do you support a full environmental assessment on each and any option being considered for the long-term management of nuclear waste prior to a final decision being made?

Environmental assessment has four distinct options, depending on the type of project considered and also on the levels of community involvement or concerns raised. The majority of projects subject to a federal environmental assessment (approximately 99 per cent) requiring an environmental assessment will undergo either a screening or a comprehensive study. These types of environmental assessment fall under the "self-directed" category given that the responsible authority is required to ensure that the assessment is carried out in compliance with the Act.

The other two types, mediation and assessment by a review panel, fall under the independent assessment category. They are "independent" because mediators and panels are appointed by the Minister of the Environment to conduct an assessment independent of government.

The Liberal government recognizes that environmental assessment is an evolving area and significant advances have been made. The Liberal government brought in amendments to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act in October 2003. Input from Canadians, through an open and comprehensive review of the Act, helped the government to focus on finding practical solutions to identified problems. The government will inject \$51.2 million in new funding over the first five years and another \$8 million each year afterwards to support the strengthened federal process.

2. Do you support a reduction of waste at source through a phase-out of nuclear power?

The fundamental challenge in energy policy is to optimize the production and consumption of energy while achieving long-term stability. The main objective of Canada's energy strategy is sustainable development:

- Economic sustainability: create conditions for a competitive and innovative energy sector. This includes competitive, open markets and fair and streamlined regulations;
- Environmental stewardship: ensure environmental impacts of energy development, transportation and use;
- Social sustainability: ensure safe, reliable, affordable energy for Canadians.

Nuclear energy has a role to play in a diversified energy mix. It provides just 13 percent of Canada's electricity while producing virtually no greenhouse gas emissions.

Research and development by the nuclear industry has made advancements in engineering, food sciences and health research, including cancer treatment.

3. Do you support a community affected by a proposal for transportation or siting of a nuclear waste repository being given a meaningful role in decisions about a repository or route proposed near them?

In 2001, the Liberal government introduced Bill C-27, *An Act respecting the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste* and the legislation received royal ascent on June 13, 2002. This enactment implements a key component of the Government of Canada's 1996 *Policy Framework for Radioactive Waste* - that the federal government, through effective oversight, would ensure that the long-term management of radioactive waste is carried out in a comprehensive, integrated and economically sound manner. The key elements of the enactment include authorizing the Governor in Council to make a decision on the choice of approach for long-term management of nuclear fuel waste for Canada to be implemented by the "waste management organization" (WMO).

Section 6 of the Act reads as follows:

Each proposed approach must include an implementation plan setting out, as a minimum,

- (a) description of activities;
- (b) a timetable for carrying out the approach;
- (c) the means that the waste management organization plans to use to avoid or minimize significant socio-economic effects on a community's way of life or on its social, cultural or economic aspirations; and
- d) a program for public consultation.

"Program for public consultation" and "minimizing significant socio-economic effects on a community's way of life" include the concerns about transport of nuclear waste.

The Liberal government will support the continued implementation of this Act.

4. Do you support there being a full debate in Parliament and a free vote prior to the Government of Canada making its final decision on a 'preferred' option for the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste?

The Liberal government is committed to ensuring that the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste is carried out in a comprehensive, economically-sound and

integrated manner. To advance this commitment, in November 2002, it brought into force the *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act*. The key elements of the Act include:

- requiring major owners of nuclear fuel waste to establish a Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) to carry out the managerial, financial, and operational activities to implement the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste;
- requiring the major owners of nuclear fuel waste to establish trust funds and to make annual payments into those trust funds to finance the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste; and,
- authorizing the federal government to make a decision on the choice of approach for long-term management of nuclear fuel waste to be implemented by the NWMO.

The NWMO was established in 2002 and is currently studying various approaches for the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste, as required by the Act. The NWMO's efforts are involving extensive public consultation including the participation of aboriginal peoples.

The NWMO must report annually to the government on its activities and must provide its final report on the results of its study by November 15, 2005. Its first annual report was received in March 2003, reporting on the creation of the NWMO and appointment of its Board of Directors. The second annual report (2004) reflected that the NWMO was making progress, giving high priority to public involvement and releasing its first key discussion document, *Asking the Right Questions? The Future Management of Used Nuclear Fuel*. The discussion document explained the framework by which the NWMO's study will proceed.

The *Nuclear Fuel Waste Act* also demands that the producers of nuclear fuel waste set aside funds for the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste. To date those funds amount to \$660 million and have involved contributions from Ontario Power Generation, Hydro-Quebec, New Brunswick Power, and Atomic Energy of Canada Limited.