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MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**SARAH ROBERTS**  
CAUCUS CHAIR

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEES:  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (MVC)  
MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS (MVC)  
LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

September 26, 2013

Chairman Allison Mcfarlane  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Mail Stop O-16G4  
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Chairman Mcfarlane,

We are writing to encourage the U.S Nuclear Regulatory Commission to oppose Ontario Power Generation's proposal for a deep geologic repository (DGR), which would be a long-term facility for low- and intermediate-level radioactive wastes. This DGR would be located at the Bruce Nuclear site in Tiverton, Ontario, and would be less than one half mile from Lake Huron. Its close vicinity to our Great Lakes has the grave potential for adverse impacts to the public's health, the environment and local economies. We understand the proposal is not under US jurisdiction, but we believe it is important for the U.S. to take a strong stand against the proposal.

The longevity and dangerous nature of the low- and intermediate-level radioactive wastes that would be buried in the geologic repository should be strongly considered. Intermediate-level waste can be radioactive for approximately 100,000 years. It is impossible to be certain about the geological safety of the proposed location for that many years into the future, especially when one considers the fact that the Great Lakes were formed only about 10,000 years ago. OPG claims their computer models demonstrated that this facility will be safe. However, even you have raised questions about computer modeling. With regard to Yucca Mountain, you previously noted that "Many assumptions go into these models. The problem though is that one cannot make assumptions about the processes or features that one is not aware of.... Others have explored the use and misuse of models in the earth sciences and technical policy decision making. ...One of the main conclusions from these works is that these models cannot be validated or verified."

In regards to the highly radioactive and chemically hazardous material that would be housed in the site, Ontario Power Generation acknowledges the fact that "people living on or near the site could be exposed to the contaminants..." According to the EPA, exposure to this type of low and intermediate-level radiation could cause cancer and DNA mutations.

We are deeply concerned about the potential for devastating effects that the storage of nuclear waste underground might have on the Great Lakes and the drinking water for many Michiganders. Millions of Michigan citizens live downstream from the proposed repository and this could be a serious risk to the public's safety and the quality of our water. The Saint Clair River, Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River provide several drinking water intakes downstream from the proposed site. The people in charge of this decision must consider the possibility for contamination, which should be avoided at all costs. We need Michigan to be a leader in protecting our water and the public's health.

The construction of this geologic repository would set a dangerous precedent. Nowhere in the Great Lakes Basin is there currently a DGR for nuclear waste. In fact, there is only one in the entire United States and at the present time there are none in Canada. The reason for their rarity and widespread skepticism is the possibility of dangerous outcomes if any releases occur. The disaster at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant demonstrates the devastating effects of radiation

leaks. The earthquake and subsequent tsunami that occurred in Japan on March 11, 2011, have caused radiation leaks that are strong enough to deliver a deadly dose of radiation to an unprotected person within hours. In addition, the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) has reported that about 300 tons of radioactive groundwater continues to escape into the Pacific Ocean every day. We should learn from Fukushima to ensure a nuclear incident such as that one never takes place, especially in light of reported earthquakes in Ontario as recently as May of this year.

According to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement both Canada and the United States are responsible for protecting the Great Lakes. Due to the possibility for contamination of our drinking water, the potential for adverse public health impacts, the chance that our local economies that rely on our water resources could be hurt, and the close proximity to the Great Lakes, the United States must be involved in this discussion. In this case Canada's decision could have grave impacts on American citizens.

Your response to this matter is urgent. The Joint Review Panel for the Ontario Power Generation Deep Geologic Repository has already begun its public hearings which will conclude on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013. As part of their process the panel is taking testimony from a variety of stakeholders, will conduct an environmental assessment of the project and will consider the application by OPG to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission for a license to prepare the site and construct the DGR facility. Within 90 days of the close of the review, the Joint Review Panel will submit that environmental assessment report to the federal Minister of the Environment outlining its conclusions, rationale, and recommendations.

We strongly urge you to reconsider your position and oppose this project. We implore you to work with the Canadian government to find a safer location away from our Great Lakes. We do not support the proposed underground nuclear waste repository and will be testifying this month at the Joint Review Panel to share our concerns.

We are available to talk with you about his issue at any time. We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,



Sarah Roberts  
State Representative  
18<sup>th</sup> District



Hoon-Yung Hopgood  
State Senator  
8<sup>th</sup> District

## CHAIRMAN Resource

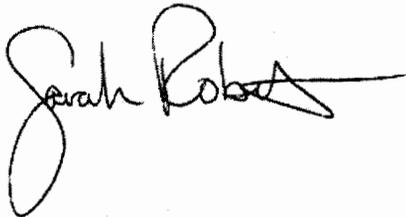
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**From:** Rep. Sarah Roberts (District 18) <SarahRoberts@house.mi.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 27, 2013 5:41 PM  
**To:** CHAIRMAN Resource  
**Subject:** Letter Regarding OPG's Proposed Nuclear Repository  
**Attachments:** Letter Regarding OPG's DGR- AM.pdf

Dear Chairman Mcfarlane,

Please see attached letter regarding Ontario Power Generation's proposed nuclear repository.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Roberts". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.