

Senators Hopgood, Kowall, Knollenberg, Pavlov, Hertel, Gregory, Hood, Ananich, Warren, Marleau, Johnson, Bieda, Hansen, Schmidt, Colbeck, Booher, Jones, Schuitmaker, Rocca, Brandenburg and Proos offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 64.

A resolution to memorialize the United States Congress to do all it can to oppose the construction of an underground nuclear waste repository in Ontario, Canada, and to urge Canadian officials to find alternatives to Ontario Power Generation's proposal to bury nuclear waste in the Great Lakes Basin.

Whereas, Ontario Power Generation (OPG) is proposing to construct a permanent underground burial facility at the Bruce Nuclear Generating Station. This deep geologic repository would be used to contain all of the low- and intermediate-level waste, some of which is highly radioactive and much of which will remain toxic for over 100,000 years, originating from the company's three Ontario-based facilities. This site, about 440 yards below lake level, is less than a mile inland from the shore of Lake Huron and is approximately 120 miles upstream from the main drinking water intakes for Southeast Michigan; and

Whereas, The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission appointed a joint review panel that was charged with evaluating OPG's proposal to bury nuclear waste beside Lake Huron. On May 6, 2015, the joint review panel released its environmental assessment report on the repository, recommending that the federal Minister of Environment approve the project. The Minister of Environment, Leona Aglukkaq, now has 120 days to review the report before deciding if she will accept it, which would allow the licensure process and construction to move forward; and

Whereas, In 1986, the Canadian government strongly opposed the United States Department of Energy's plan to consider the construction of a nuclear waste site in northern Vermont. The Canadian government argued a nuclear waste site in Vermont could contaminate their lakes, rivers, and groundwater, posing a serious risk to human health and the environment. Honoring their request, the Department of Energy agreed to remove the Vermont location from consideration. Almost 30 years later, Michigan and many other states are asking the Canadian government to grant us the same courtesy that the United States granted Canada with the Vermont site; and

Whereas, Lake Huron and the other Great Lakes are critically important resources to both the United States and Canada. The Great Lakes are critical for shipping, fishing, boating, recreation, and tourism in the region. The Great Lakes contain 95 percent of North America's surface freshwater and provide drinking water to over 40 million people in both Canada and the United States. Government entities whose boundaries encompass the Great Lakes Basin are compelled to protect this vital resource for future generations; and

Whereas, If nuclear waste spilled into the Great Lakes, it could have lasting and severe adverse environmental, health, and economic impacts on the Great Lakes and the people who depend on them for their livelihood; and

Whereas, Placing a permanent nuclear burial facility so close to the Great Lakes is ill-advised. The potential damage to the Great Lakes from any leak or breach of radioactive material far outweighs any benefits that could be derived from burying radioactive waste at the site. The ecology of the lakes, which is valuable beyond measure to the health and economic well-being of this entire region of the continent, should not be placed at risk by storing radioactive waste so close to the shoreline; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we memorialize the United States Congress to do all it can to oppose the construction of an underground nuclear waste repository in Ontario, Canada; and be it further

Resolved, That we urge Canadian officials to find alternatives to Ontario Power Generation's proposal to bury nuclear waste in the Great Lakes Basin; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Canadian Prime Minister, the Premier of Ontario, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, the Canadian Minister of Environment, the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.