



## **STAFF REPORT**

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**Meeting Date:** January 10, 2022

**Title:** NWMO Funding Agreement for the 2022 Learn More Program

**Prepared By:** Roger Nesbitt, CAO

**Department:** Administration

**Report Number:** Administration-2022-004

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### **Recommendation:**

THAT Council resolves to execute the NWMO Funding Agreement for the 2022 Learn More Program; and,

THAT the resolution passed by Council includes the following statement, "NWMO and the City of Dryden acknowledge that acceptance of the 2022 Learn More Program funding does not constitute the Municipality's community support for either the APM project or the selection of the Township of Ignace as a final host community pursuant to NWMO's Site Selection Process."

### **Background:**

Commencing in 2010, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) has been conducting a process to identify a willing community to host facilities for the long-term management of Canada's used nuclear fuel. The Township of Ignace is one of the 22 communities that had independently entered into this NWMO site selection process.

Canada's plan for the long-term care of used nuclear fuel is coined Adaptive Phased Management (APM). The ultimate goal of the APM project is to safely contain and isolate the used nuclear fuel in a single deep geological repository (DGR), constructed in a suitable rock formation. The objective of the site selection process is to arrive at a single location for the DGR and associated Centre of Expertise through several phases of progressively more detailed technical, scientific and socio-economic assessment.

The process is advancing through a multi-year series of steps to ensure that, above all, the site selected is safe and secure, and meets the highest scientific, professional and ethical standards. Since launching the process, the NWMO has been working collaboratively with communities interested in learning to begin exploring their potential to meet site selection requirements. Upon the completion of Phase 1 assessments, a smaller list of communities was identified as warranting further study by advancing to Phase 2. Ignace is now one of two remaining sites in the site selection process. Further information regarding the NWMO and APM project can be obtained at [www.nwmo.ca](http://www.nwmo.ca).

### **Discussion:**

The potential DGR site that the NWMO is studying in the Dryden/Ignace area is in a rock formation located between Dryden and Ignace in unorganized territory, on Crown land. The NWMO has reported that this potential DGR site is located approximately 35 kilometers from the municipal boundary of Ignace, and 40 kilometers from the municipal boundary of Dryden. As such, the City of Dryden has inherited the role of a Significant Neighbouring Community in relation to the NWMO's APM project.

City Council has recognized the importance for Dryden residents and municipal leadership to learn about the APM project, including the safety of the proposed facility and the positive and negative impacts such a project could have on the City of Dryden. For this purpose, City Council has committed to learning about the APM project and engaging with the NWMO to create learning opportunities for Dryden residents and identify potential impacts to our community.

It is important that the City and the ratepayers of Dryden do not experience any financial or human resource hardships simply because our community has inherited the role of a Significant Neighbouring Community in the NWMO's APM Site Selection Process that's resulted from the Township of Ignace's interest in potentially being a DGR host community. To avoid these hardships, the City of Dryden has been leveraging the NWMO's Learn More funding program for several years now with the most recent funding agreement expiring at the end of 2021. This NWMO funding initiated in 2014 and to date has accounted for approximately \$1.5MM in funding for the municipality over an eight year period.

The proposed NWMO funding agreement for the 2022 Learn More program has an estimated value of \$980,424 and will consist of funding for the following resource components and activities;

- Economic Development Manager (existing contract position, partially funded)
- Special Projects and Communications Manager
- Junior Planner
- Youth Leadership Intern and youth/student positions
- Legal counsel and professional communication support
- Salary allocation for municipal staff and Council to cover involvement in APM initiatives

- Travel and training expenses
- Operating expenses
- Youth Centre support
- Learning and Engagement initiatives for municipal leadership and staff, community stakeholders and other community members including youth and indigenous residents
- Municipal strategic planning, capacity building and impact identification in the form of 3<sup>rd</sup> party studies and municipal strategy development

It is extremely important to note that the City and the NWMO have been very clear that the Learn More funding agreements entered into do not constitute Dryden's community support for either the APM project or the selection of Ignace as a final host community pursuant to NWMO's Site Selection Process. This is a common clause historically and currently included in the NWMO's Learn More funding agreements that the NWMO has with many municipalities and First Nations communities.

The intention of this funding has been clearly stated and aids municipal leadership in developing their understanding of the potential impacts and benefits such a project may bring about for Dryden. We must be positioned to come from a place of knowledge and purposeful planning, not one of reaction or delayed response as this will not serve the best interests of our community. Dryden must have a clear, strong voice in this process as we are the only ones who will look after our community interests.

The recommendation is for Council to provide direction to execute the 2022 NWMO Learn More funding agreement thereby helping to mitigate possible resource constraints associated with the municipality's involvement in the APM project, to fund learning opportunities and to build municipal capacity in strategic areas.

### **Financial Implications:**

The total amount of municipal funding provided through his agreement for 2022 is approximately \$980,424.