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## **ELECTRONIC MAIL**

August 7, 2025

Peace Regional Energy Committee  
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Peace Regional Energy Committee,

Thank you for your correspondence to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) dated July 21, 2025, where you sought clarity on topics that emerged from community engagement in relation to the [integrated assessment](#) on the Peace River Nuclear Power Project. Please see our responses below.

### **1. Municipal Role in the Approval and Licensing Process**

In your letter, you sought confirmation of the extent to which municipalities are involved or consulted within the regulatory and licensing framework.

All nuclear facilities in Canada are regulated by the CNSC, and those also designated under the *Impact Assessment Act (IAA)* are subject to an integrated assessment led by IAAC. While nuclear facilities in Canada fall under federal jurisdiction and regulation, municipalities play an important role, especially in areas related to land use, infrastructure, emergency management and community engagement.

Municipalities are encouraged to become involved in nuclear projects in or around the area of their jurisdiction. Some opportunities to participate in different stages are presented here.

Review of project: Municipalities are welcome to participate in the integrated assessment to provide information and advice to IAAC, CNSC and the review panel regarding potential effects of the project on municipalities and local services. Opportunities for public participation are outlined in the [draft Public Participation Plan](#) which is expected to be finalized by the end of the planning phase. In addition, during the integrated assessment process, municipalities may act as a conduit for public input. Municipalities can request meetings with IAAC and the CNSC to learn more about the process, share information with their communities, help facilitate in-person open houses/information sessions to help identify important issues raised by communities, provide input on key documents during public comment periods, and participate in the panel hearing.

On July 23, the Government of Alberta, in [their submission](#) of comments to IAAC, outlined how the *Municipal Government Act* authorizes municipalities to adopt and implement a

land use bylaw, such as those related to noise, time of operation, road/access, and other service-related approvals. IAAC and the CNSC encourage you to read their submission in full.

Decision-making: For this project, which is undergoing an integrated assessment, the Governor-in-Council (Cabinet) determines if the project can proceed. That decision is made in consideration of the review panel's report which outlines their conclusions and recommendations, as well as the proposed conditions. The Minister will issue a Decision Statement and, if approved, binding conditions that the proponent must meet.

If approved, the review panel, as a panel of the CNSC's independent Commission under the *Nuclear Safety Control Act* (NSCA), would make a decision on whether to issue a Licence to Prepare Site (LTPS). If the project was approved, all subsequent licensing decisions would be made by the Commission.

There is no public participation opportunity during the Decision-making phase of the impact assessment.

A licensed site: Should the applicant receive a LTPS, the province becomes responsible for coordinating emergency management and transportation, with support from the municipality as necessary and as per provincial direction. In addition to coordinating safety and infrastructure efforts, the municipality also issues building permits for any structures that fall outside the jurisdiction of the CNSC, ensuring local compliance with zoning, safety, and construction regulations.

Other opportunities: Municipalities are also encouraged to contribute to public consultations (e.g., proposed CNSC regulatory documents); participate in CNSC public hearing proceedings for future licensing phases and share information on planned sampling by CNSC staff and results of the [Independent Environmental Monitoring Program](#).

## **2. Consideration of a Non-Binding Plebiscite**

In your letter, you asked for clarification on how the results of a non-binding plebiscite would be considered within the context of the federal assessment and licensing process and how such input would factor into any panel deliberations or broader regulatory decisions.

During the integrated assessment process, should a non-binding plebiscite be held in a community potentially affected by a designated project, the municipality is able to share those results with the review panel through a submission on the public registry. In that case, the results of the plebiscite would be considered and weighed by the review panel along with all other relevant information regarding the project's assessment. The review panel prepares a report outlining their conclusions and recommendations based on the information provided by participants (e.g. the proponent, public, Indigenous Nations and communities, federal authorities, and other jurisdictions) throughout the impact assessment process.

Under CNSC's regulatory framework, there does not exist a policy that mandates a non-binding plebiscite to be implemented in the licensing process. The municipalities can

conduct plebiscites if they wish, as part of their own decision-making or community consultations efforts. While the results are not legally binding, they can be presented to the review panel as part of the public hearing. The review panel would consider the outcomes of a plebiscite if those results were presented, as they would consider all information presented.

### **3. Definition and Interpretation of “Willing Host Community”**

In your letter, you sought guidance on the definition of “willing host community” and the extent to which this designation may influence regulatory or licensing outcomes. A “willing host community” is a term defined and recognized by the Nuclear Waste Management Organization, who is responsible for the long-term management of Canada’s used nuclear fuel. They are [mandated](#) by the Government of Canada to identify an acceptable site *in a willing host community* for a spent fuel repository. This term is not defined within the CNSC or IAAC regulatory framework.

In accordance with the CNSC’s regulatory framework, applicants are responsible for selecting and justifying their proposed project. The CNSC’s mandate is to determine whether the project, as proposed, will be safe for people and the environment. The CNSC does require, under REGDOC 3.2.2 Indigenous Consultation and REGDOC 3.2.1 Public Information and Disclosure, that proponents engage early and often with Indigenous groups and the public when planning nuclear projects. Consultation with Indigenous groups and public engagement are important aspect of the CNSC’s regulatory and decision-making processes to ensure that their concerns are heard and addressed throughout the regulatory process and to determine that the project as proposed by the proponent, will make adequate provisions to protect people and the environment. During public hearings by the review panel, specific concerns and issues can be raised by the local and/or affected communities directly to the review panel through oral or written submissions to be considered as part of the decision-making process.

Sincerely,

<sent electronically>

Wajeeha Siddiqui  
A/Panel Manager, Review Panels Division