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**Urgent concerns regarding non-compliance in sewage effluent at Chalk River  
Laboratories : a call for immediate action and transparency**

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To Whom It May Concern,

We, the undersigned, are writing to express our deep concern regarding the recent non-compliance in sewage effluent at Chalk River Laboratories, operated by Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL), and its impact on the Ottawa River watershed.

On April 24, 2024, CNL issued a bulletin disclosing that routine sampling of effluent from the Sanitary Sewage Treatment Facility (SSTF) at Chalk River Laboratories revealed non-compliance with regulatory requirements. This finding is troubling, particularly given the sensitive environmental context of the Ottawa River watershed, which holds immense spiritual and cultural significance for our communities on the unceded territory of Kebaowek First Nation.

It is shocking and unacceptable that this non-compliance was first discovered by CNL in February 2024, yet the public is still not being informed about which contaminants are exceeding limits, the extent of the exceedance, and whether any of them are radioactive. This lack of transparency raises serious concerns about the potential impacts on public health and the environment, highlighting the urgent need for greater accountability and openness in CNL's operations.

The Ottawa River is not merely a body of water – it serves as a vital water source for many communities in Ontario and Quebec. The release of non-compliant effluent into this watershed poses risks to the health and integrity of the river's ecosystems. It also raises concerns about the site for the Near Surface Disposal Facility (NSDF), on CNL property. We, the undersigned and 140 municipalities of Ontario and Quebec, are deeply concerned about the siting of the NSDF proposed to be sited less than one kilometer from the Ottawa River. Our concerns are underscored by the recent release of non-compliant effluent by CNL and secrecy around the contents.

Actions needed to address this issue include :

- Thorough investigations : CNL and Environment Canada must conduct rigorous investigations to determine and expose the root causes and the extent of the non-compliance and identify corrective measures ;
- Compliance measures : Immediate steps should be taken in consultations with Kebaowek First Nation on each of those steps, to bring the Sanitary Sewage Treatment Facility back into compliance with regulatory standards to prevent further environmental and health harm ;
- Transparency and accountability : CNL must enhance transparency and accountability in reporting and addressing such incidents, ensuring timely and accurate communication with affected communities and regulatory agencies.

We call upon the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC), Minister Steven Guilbeault of Environment and Climate Change Canada, and other relevant authorities to closely monitor the situation and ensure that CNL fulfills its obligations to protect the environment and public health.

Furthermore, we urge CNL to engage in meaningful consultation with Indigenous communities, including Kebaowek First Nation, to address concerns and ensure that such incidents do not recur. This incident underscores broader concerns regarding CNL's adherence to regulatory standards and obligations of the government of Canada under United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

It is imperative that relevant authorities takes immediate and proactive steps to rectify this situation and rebuild trust with the communities affected by this non-compliance.

We look forward to a prompt and transparent response from relevant authorities to address these urgent concerns and safeguard the health and well-being of our communities and ecosystems.

Sincerely,



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Chief Lance Haymond Kebaowek First Nation

With the support of :



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Sébastien Lemire, Member of Parliament for Abitibi-Témiscamingue - Bloc Québécois and INAN Critic and Vice-Chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs



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Monique Pauzé, Member of Parliament for Repentigny - Bloc Québécois and ENVI Critic and Vice-Chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Environment



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Mario Simard, Member of Parliament for Jonquière - Bloc Québécois and RNNR Critic and Vice-Chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources

*Gordon Edwards*

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Gordon Edwards, PhD Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility

*Ole Hendrickson*

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Ole Hendrickson, PhD Concerned Citizens of Renfrew County and Area