

News For Immediate Release
2002

March 18,

**World's Largest Nuclear Waste Dump will be built
without Adequate Environmental Review**

Supreme Court of Canada refuses to hear appeal from citizen's group

Toronto, Ontario – Childhood leukemia is 40 per cent above the provincial average within a 25-kilometre radius of the Bruce and Pickering nuclear power plants, and nuclear waste at Bruce has already contaminated the groundwater in the area. Although this information was put before the Supreme Court of Canada, it still refused to hear the appeal of a citizen's group looking for answers about the potential risks of a new nuclear waste dump.

“The federal government is standing by while people living in the shadow of the Bruce nuclear plant and its radioactive pollution deal with the fall out,” says Burkhard Mausberg, Executive Director of Environmental Defence Canada, a national organization supporting the legal challenge. “How are the citizens supposed to protect themselves if both the environmental review process and the justice system fail them?”

The Supreme Court's decision not to hear the appeal ends a lengthy battle by the Inverhuron and District Ratepayers Association. The courts have ruled that the Association must pay more than \$75,000 in cost awards to Ontario Power Generation and the federal government. The decision sends a message to Canadians that industry takes priority over environment and health. And it discourages Canadians from pursuing environmental clean up through the justice system.

Since Ontario Power Generation's announcement to build the nuclear waste dump

in 1996, the Inverhuron and District Ratepayers Association has been fighting to get an independent environmental assessment as provided for under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Their request has been ignored.

"The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act contains provisions that projects of this scope and seriousness be subject to an independent assessment," says Normand de la Chevrotiere, spokesperson for Inverhuron and District Ratepayers Association. "It seems that this only applies when it suits the industry, not when it gets in the way. If the world's largest nuclear waste storage facility does not merit an independent and adequate environmental review, what does?"

Ontario Power Generation plans to build a huge "dry storage facility" just five kilometres from Inverhuron, a town southwest of Owen Sound. The site would house Bruce's existing radioactive waste as well as waste produced over the foreseeable future. The original design presented to the public was altered, without any change to the environmental assessment even though Ontario Power Generation and its consultants had information which suggested exposure would be higher. Ontario Power Generation has thus failed to address the community's concerns about the effects of the additional radiation exposure.

.../2

-2-

"There are significant human health concerns about this project and the existing Bruce facility that won't get addressed without an independent and expert public review," says Rodney Northey of Birchall Northey, the environmental law firm that acted for the Association. "We tried the environmental assessment process and then the courts to find out what risks the community faces. To our extreme disappointment, the courts showed no interest in getting to the bottom of many discrepancies or even in compelling the government to do so. The Association is going to have to go elsewhere to get answers."

The Inverhuron and District Ratepayers Association was founded in 1946 by

residents of the region. Its activities around nuclear waste include letter-writing campaigns, events, and discussions with other interested groups and individuals.

Founded in 1984, Environmental Defence Canada (www.edcanada.org) gives Canadians the tools and knowledge they need to protect and improve the environment and their health. Environmental Defence Canada was previously known as the Canadian Environmental Defence Fund.

-30-

For further information, please contact:

Jennifer Foulds
Environmental Defence Canada
(416) 323-9521

Normand de la Chevrotiere
Inverhuron and District Ratepayers Association
(519) 742-0730