

# Chapter 3

## The Canadian Nuclear Fuel Waste Management Program: Analysis

The overall objective of the Canadian Nuclear Fuel Waste Management Program is to ensure that there will be no significant adverse effects on man or the environment from nuclear fuel waste, at any time.

E.L.S. Rosinger and R.S. Dixon,  
Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. (1982)

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### Introduction

The generic disposal concept on which the Canadian Nuclear Fuel Waste Management Program is relying, is that waste can be isolated efficiently and permanently in what is considered to be stable geological formations, at a depth of from 500 to 1,000 metres. In August 1981, the federal government and the Ontario government issued a joint statement outlining the review and assessment procedure for the proposed disposal concept. Briefly, the process comprises three stages:

- regulatory and environmental review;
- a full public hearing; and
- a decision by governments on the acceptability of the concept, based on information and recommendations flowing from stages (1) and (2).

Following the review and the hearings, Ottawa and Queen's Park will have the following options:

- *concept acceptance*: acceptance of the concept by both governments is a prerequisite to any proposal for selection of a site for a waste-disposal facility;
- *conditional acceptance of the disposal concept*: this would require further research by AECL, and supplementary information; or
- *rejection of the disposal concept*: in this event the two governments would have to consider alternative proposals.<sup>(57)</sup>

In April 1981, the federal government launched a ten-year program of generic research and development into nuclear fuel waste management. Apart from storage, transportation

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<sup>(57)</sup> OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (1987), p. 60.