



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prépare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION NO.: 421-02174

BY: MR. ERSKINE-SMITH (BEACHES—EAST YORK)

DATE: MARCH 20, 2018

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: THE HONOURABLE JIM CARR, P.C., M.P.

Response by the Minister of Natural Resources

SIGNATURE
Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Hazardous products

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

The Government of Canada places the highest priority on public safety and security and environmental protection in all nuclear activities in Canada.

Canada imported the highly enriched uranium (HEU) referred to in the petition from the United States (U.S.) between the mid-1980s and 2003 to produce medical isotopes that have supported diagnostic medical procedures in Canada and abroad. Canada is returning its inventory of HEU, which includes fuel rods and target residue material (HEU in liquid form), to the U.S. as part of an international initiative to consolidate the inventories at a small number of very secure locations.

The U.S. will process the material at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina to manufacture low enriched uranium fuel for use in U.S. nuclear power plants. This will eliminate the need to manage it in Canada over the long term. Alternative approaches for managing this material in Canada have been carefully considered, and the repatriation of this inventory represents a safe, secure, timely and permanent solution for the lifecycle management of this material.

The Government of Canada is confident that the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the U.S. Department of Transport have rigorously and independently reviewed the plans to transport HEU to the U.S. and that all required safety and control measures have been considered and implemented to ensure that health, safety, security and the environment will be protected.

Both Canadian and American authorities have certified, independently, the transportation package that will be used to ship the target residue material. Packages of this nature must meet rigorous testing requirements that cover potential severe accident situations. These tests, developed by International Atomic Energy Agency member states, including Canada, are based on decades of extensive research and development work by national and international scientific and engineering organizations. These tests are designed to account for accidents and to ensure there is no radiological impact in the event of an accident. Nuclear materials in certified packages, including HEU fuel, have been safely transported in the same manner for decades, and there have been no accidents resulting in the release of nuclear substances from these shipments.

This is the best approach for Canada, where repatriation initiatives are based on science and international best practices.