

28 January 2020

Dear Editor,

We are a group of scientists who reside in the neighborhoods around BWXT, and we would like to draw your attention to the results of the Independent Environmental Monitoring Program conducted by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and published on their website on January 22, 2020.

We are concerned because concentrations of the heavy metal beryllium (Be), which is used in the BWXT production process, have steadily and significantly increased in soil samples taken in the vicinity of BWXT since recording began in 2014. The clear increase of Be in soil samples is likely being driven by significant increases in air concentrations, which is particularly worrying because beryllium can be toxic if inhaled. More worryingly, the highest values of beryllium in 2019 were found in the samples in the Prince of Wales school playground. Although none of these samples have reached the threshold at which intervention is mandated, the increase alone mandates intervention and further evaluation to ascertain the source.

BWXT responsibly monitors the outputs of the production process to detect pollutants such as beryllium and has indicated that their outputs are at or near zero. This statement is inconsistent with the publicly available results of CNSC's environmental monitoring program that shows, clearly and unambiguously, that beryllium concentrations are increasing.

Given the accumulation of Be in soils, it seems inappropriate to discuss an unrestricted licence renewal (or extension) before establishing the source of this contaminant. The only reasonable course of action is to request that, prior to any licensing agreement, the cause of this increase in Be be identified so that it can be stopped.

Yours sincerely,

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