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Les enjeux de la filière uranifère au Québec

6211-08-012



Is Social Licence a Licence to Stall?

The School of Public Policy
University of Calgary

Michael Binder, President
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
Date: October 8, 2014
Edocs #4522577 v.4 – Oct 6, 2014



- Regulates the use of nuclear energy and materials to protect the **health, safety** and **security** of Canadians and the **environment**
- Implements Canada's **international commitments** on the peaceful use of nuclear energy
- **Disseminates objective scientific, technical and regulatory information to the public**

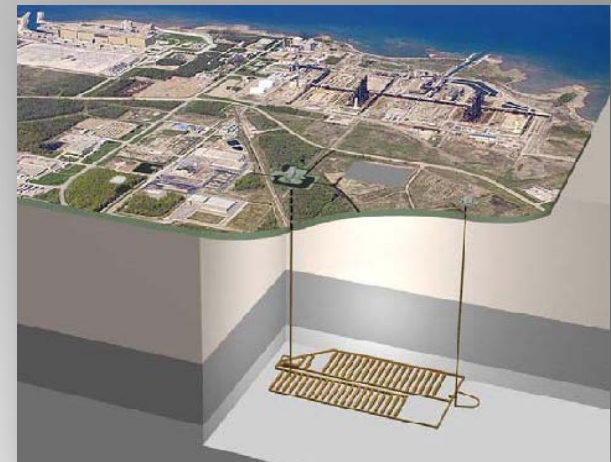


Canada's nuclear watchdog

CNSC Regulates All Nuclear-Related Facilities and Activities



- Uranium mines and mills
- Uranium fuel fabricators and processing
- Nuclear power plants
- Waste management facilities
- Nuclear substance processing
- Industrial and medical applications
- Nuclear research and educational
- Export/import control



...From cradle to grave

CNSC Staff Located Across Canada



Fiscal year 2014-15

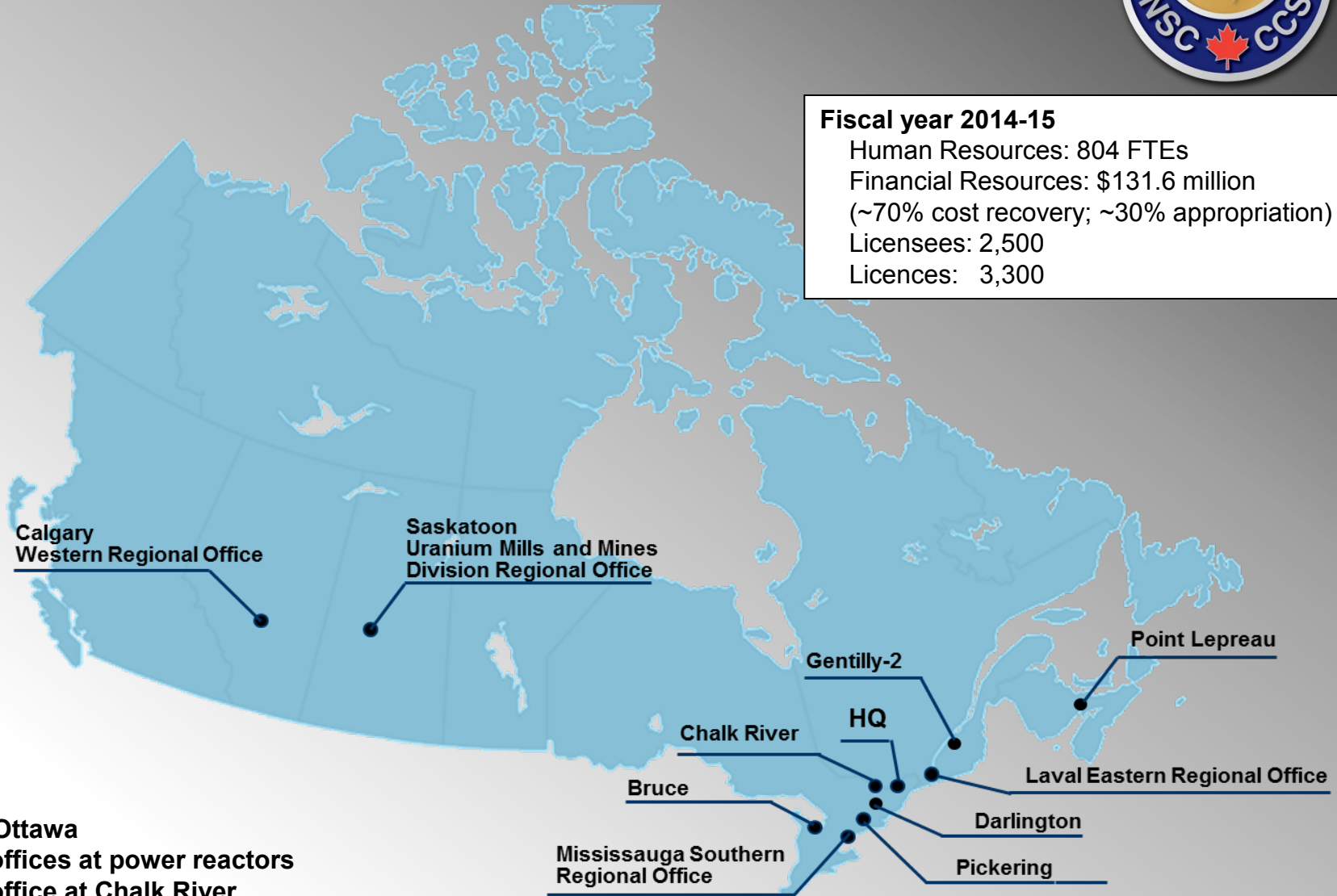
Human Resources: 804 FTEs

Financial Resources: \$131.6 million

(~70% cost recovery; ~30% appropriation)

Licensees: 2,500

Licences: 3,300



HQ in Ottawa
5 site offices at power reactors
1 site office at Chalk River
4 regional offices

Independent Commission



- Quasi-judicial administrative tribunal
- Reports to Parliament **through** Minister of Natural Resources Canada
- Commission members are independent and part-time
- Commission hearings are public and Webcast
- Staff presentations in public
- Decision can only be reviewed by Federal Court



Transparent, science-based decision-making

Safety vs social licence?



Who defines nuclear “safety”?

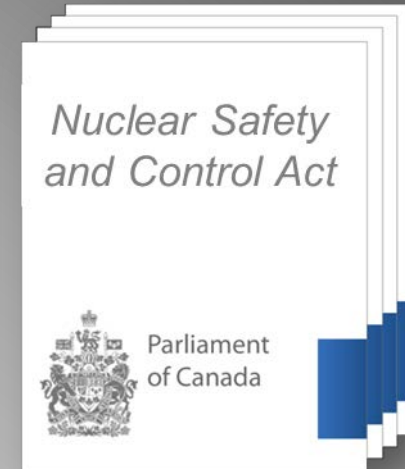
- *Nuclear Safety and Control Act* assigns role to the Commission as an expert Tribunal
- Commission establishes what is safe as it exercises its mandate to prevent “unreasonable risk”

Mandate does not include social licence

- Commission makes science-based, risk informed decisions

Social acceptance not a global phenomenon

- Post Fukushima
- Shutdowns (Japan, Germany, Switzerland) vs new builds (Russia, China, India and many newbies)



CNSC does not make determinations based on social acceptance or economic benefits

Social licence is a recurring theme throughout the nuclear cycle – why?



Public hearings allow for the public to engage in complex discussions on science and facts

- However, public often uses hearing process to raise policy concerns
 - Nuclear vs wind and solar?
 - Nuclear waste management vs NIMBY?
 - Medical isotopes vs nuclear productions?
 - Economic benefits vs environmental impacts?



Photo of intervenors from the La Ronge hearings

Not our Mandate...

Perception of risk affects social acceptability



Perceived risk not in line with facts

- An international incident can influence perception – e.g., Fukushima
- Events, pop culture, myths - reinforce a risk bias and fear



Risk perceptions are not based on science

Reality — what the numbers say



Evidence does not support nuclear energy risk perception
Fukushima – Zero radiation fatalities, 16,000 tsunami deaths

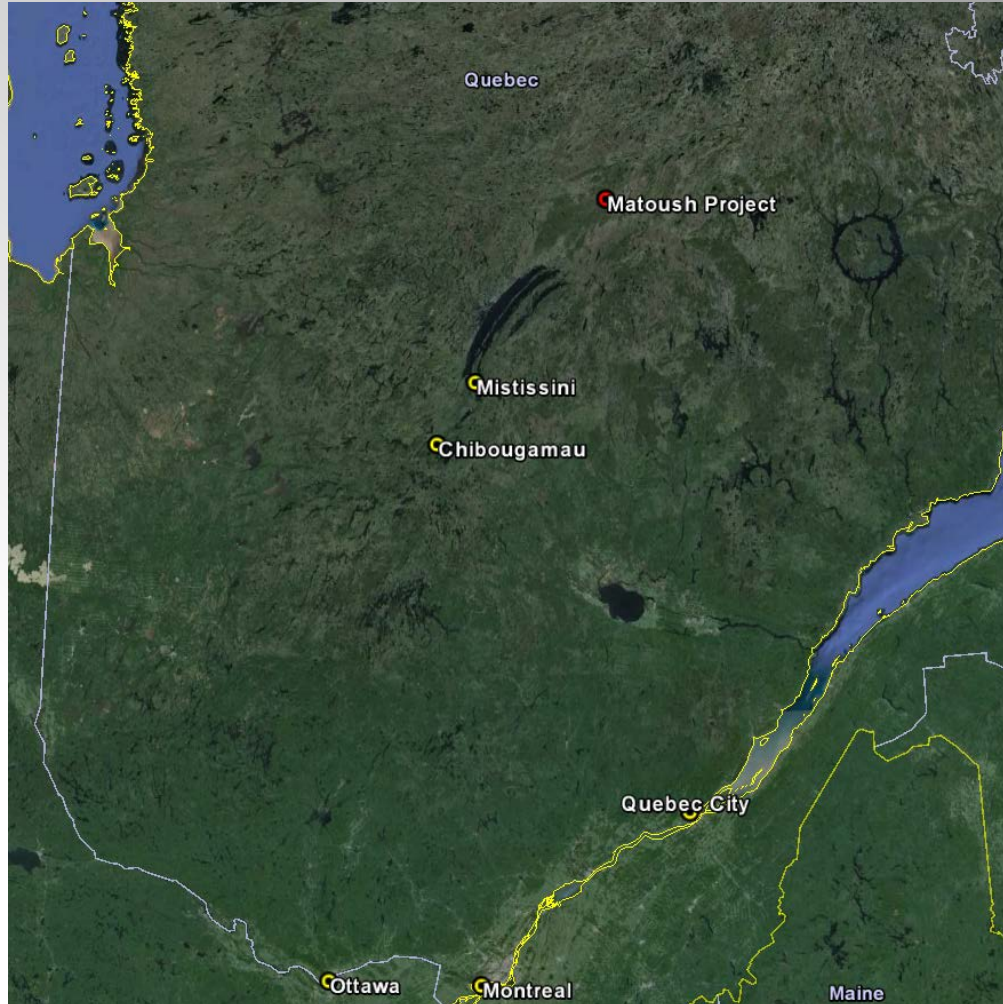
Comparing Fatal Accidents Across Energy Sources (1969 – 2000)

Energy Source	Accidents	Direct Fatalities
Coal	1,221	25,107
Oil	397	20,283
Natural Gas	125	1,978
Liquefied Petroleum Gas	105	3,921
Hydro	11	29,938
Nuclear Reactor	1	31

Source: Duane Bratt, *Canada, the Provinces and the Global Nuclear Revival*, 2012, citing the Government of Australia report, "Uranium Mining, Processing and Nuclear Energy", 2006, p. 77.

Risk is in the eye of the beholder

Case study: Matoush, Québec



Overview of Strateco Matoush Project

- Matoush uranium proposal – exploration★
- Located in northern Québec
- Triggered 2 environmental assessments – federal (1) and joint federal/provincial (1)
 - Federal – *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*
 - Federal/provincial – *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*

Case study: Matoush, Québec (cont'd)



Timeline

2006 — 2 EAs processes harmonized with separate fed/prov EA decisions

- Aboriginal members (3 out of 7) on joint fed/prov panel established for *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*

2012 — 2 federal EA decisions — no significant environmental effects (February)

- 1 federal under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and 1 federal under the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*; Provincial decision under the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* was not taken

2012 — CNSC 3-day licensing hearing in communities (June)

- 97 intervenors (mostly Cree) primarily focused on social acceptability vs science

2012 — Quebec provincial election (September)

2012 — CNSC issues licence (October)

2013 — Quebec uranium moratorium – political decision (March)

- Strateco sues provincial government over \$120M+ in costs

2014 — Quebec launches 1-year BAPE hearing (May)

...Lack of social / political acceptability trumps science-based conclusions...

Lessons learned



CNSC bases decisions on evidence and science

- Mandate — dissemination of information
 - Public hearings / webcasts
 - Participant Funding Program
 - Aboriginal and public consultation

CNSC recognizes that social licence/acceptability is an issue

- Leveraging regulatory tools — e.g. Reg Doc 99.3 – Public Info and Disclosure

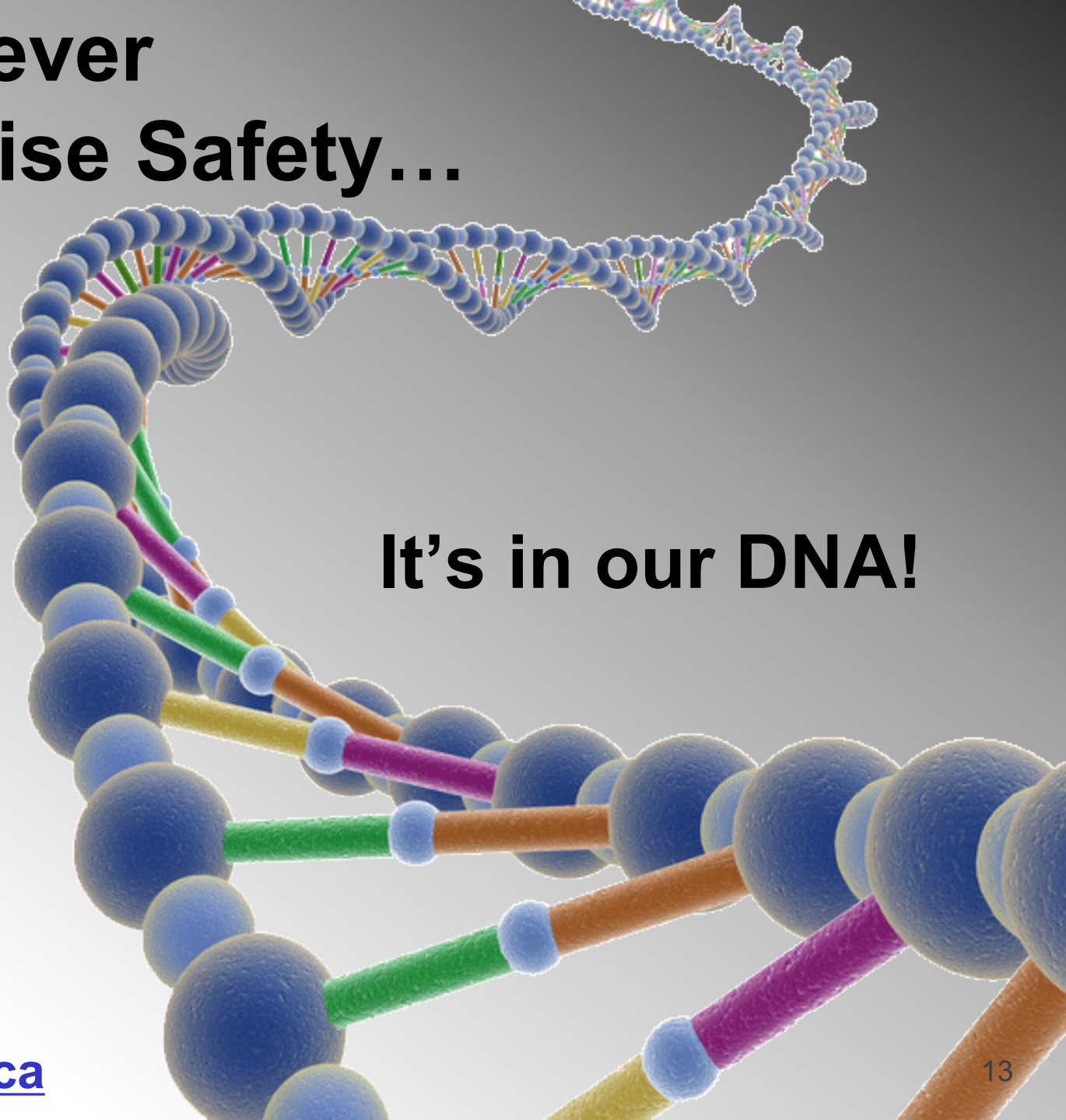
Social licence is proponent's responsibility

- Communications and outreach — garner public support
- Listen and respond to stakeholders — build trust
- Connect with all levels of government

CNSC cannot be expected to reject a safe project due to lack of social acceptability



We Will Never Compromise Safety...



It's in our DNA!