

Coalition for Responsible Energy Development in New Brunswick

www.crednb.ca | info@crednb.ca

November 12, 2026

Vicky Sedhya Maurice-Sevigny, Clerk
Standing Committee on Natural Resources
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6
E-mail: RNNR@parl.gc.ca

Re: Brief to Standing Committee on Natural Resources (RNNR) for the Study on Canada's Nuclear Future

Introduction

The Coalition for Responsible Energy Development in New Brunswick (CRED-NB) is fighting for a nuclear-free renewable energy future. Our mission is to advocate for responsible energy development in New Brunswick to address the climate crisis. CRED-NB represents over 180 individuals and 30 organizations (www.crednb.ca/about).

CRED-NB is working on defining the approaches and components best suited to deliver clean economical electricity to Canadian businesses and consumers. Our brief focuses, but not exclusively, on one area in the RNNR motion of October 7: the role of nuclear energy in meeting Canada's growing demand for reliable energy. We offer our brief to assist the Committee with its deliberations leading to a report to Parliament.

Summary of our recommendations

1. **Canada should use the fastest and most affordable pathway to a zero GHG emission power grid in Canada**: replacing fossil fuel-fired generation solely with renewable energy sources complemented by energy storage, transmission interties and demand-side management.

2. **The federal government should not support the use of nuclear power in New Brunswick**. The Point Lepreau Nuclear Generating Station (PLNGS) has a lengthy history of cost overruns resulting in upward pressure on electricity rates. Wind, solar, storage, transmission and grid modernization are far better investments.

3. **Canada should avoid subsidizing nuclear energy for domestic use or export.** During the last quarter century there has been almost no growth in global nuclear power output. With the recent and continuing drops in the cost of solar, wind and storage, the weak prospects for nuclear power are unlikely to change.

4. **All federal funding for research and development of new nuclear reactors and all grid energy technologies should be moved to independent government research granting agencies**.

Nuclear energy is unsuitable for meeting Canada's greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

Nuclear builds are too slow: Despite the optimism of nuclear proponents, the only new nuclear power plant (NPP) project that has a chance to be connected to the grid by 2035 is Ontario Power Generation's (OPG) BWRX-300 boiling water reactor. At 300 MW, it will fall far short of making a significant impact and, based on recent reporting, the project is facing significant delays. The best available research says that the small non-light water reactors proposed in other provinces will have difficulty reaching commercial viability before 2050, much too late (ref: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/merits-and-viability-of-different-nuclear-fuel-cycles-and-technology-options-and-the-waste-aspects-of-advanced-nuclear-reactors).

As for large reactors, multiple significant construction delays in such projects in G7 countries make it appear unlikely that large reactors would be able to provide sufficient energy to the grid before 2050. Grid decarbonization must happen much more rapidly to avoid continued reliance on fossil-fuel sources of energy generation. (ref: World Nuclear Industry Status Report https://www.worldnuclearreport.org/World-Nuclear-Industry-Status-Report-2026, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EPR_(nuclear_reactor) and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vogtle_Electric_Generating_Plant)

Nuclear builds are much more expensive than renewables: The proposed novel small modular nuclear reactors are not a match for the price and deployment speed of existing renewable energy technology. The latest independent research on small reactors found that they are too expensive, too slow, and too risky (ref: Institute for Energy Economics & Financial Analysis ieefa.org/articles/small-modular-reactors-are-still-too-expensive-too-slow-and-too-risky, and https://ieefa.org/resources/small-modular-reactions-carbon-capture-wrong-resources-colorados-energy-transition).

One of the large reactor designs being considered in Canada, the Westinghouse AP1000, was last built in the U.S. in a project that went significantly over budget, making it the most expensive reactor ever built. (ref: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vogtle_Electric_Generating_Plant)

Nuclear plants do not mix well with renewables on a grid: Nuclear power plants (NPPs) do not help integrate solar and wind power as they cannot fill the role of a flexible load-following source of power. The economics of a NPP depends on being able to run at a constantly high output. Much of the cost of a NPP is in its creation so if it does not achieve a high-capacity factor then the already high levelized cost of energy (LCOE) goes even higher. For example, Lazard calculates the LCOE for nuclear power using a capacity factor range of 89-94%. (ref: Lazard LCOE Report https://www.lazard.com/research-insights/financial-advisory/levelized-cost-of-energyplus-lcoeplus/). Given this conflict between nuclear and renewable energy, grid operators lack the incentive to make the necessary transition to renewable power sources, contributing to the delay in the transition away from fossil fuels sources.

Nuclear energy in New Brunswick has been a financial disaster

The history of nuclear power in New Brunswick is one of cost overruns: NB Power has one of the world's worst performing nuclear power plants, and a legacy of debt resulting in a terrible debt-to-equity ratio of 92%. As the NB Auditor-General pointed out in 2020, most of the NB Power debt came from cost overruns in both the original construction and the 2012 refurbishment of the Point Lepreau Nuclear plant. (ref: https://www.agnb-vgnb.ca/uploads/volume_section_translations/337/file/Chap3e.pdf) Even now, those costs represent over half of the total NB Power debt. In addition, in recent years, the Point Lepreau reactor has been taken offline for hundreds of days of unplanned maintenance, further pushing up electricity rates due to the costs of repairs and replacement electricity. New Brunswick cannot afford more nuclear power even with federal largess. (ref: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/lepeau-nuclear-offline-generator-repairs-maintenance-cost-rates-holt-government-1.7363968. Wind, solar, storage, transmission and grid modernization are far better investments as they are more cost-effective and have faster less risky construction and operation. (ref: Forbes at https://www.worldnuclearreport.org/Power-Play-The-Economics-Of-Nuclear-Vs-Renewables)

Nuclear energy is not a growth market.

The world has chosen renewables over nuclear energy: In the race to transition to an economic reliable net-zero energy system, renewables outcompete nuclear power both in terms of cost and development speed. During the last 15 years (2010-2025) the annual global electricity generation from nuclear power has remained in the range of 2.4-2.8 PWh. The annual output from wind and solar during that same period grew from less than 0.4 PWh to more than 5.4 PWh. In 2025, wind and solar power produced almost double the electricity generated by nuclear power and they are on track to continue to widen that gap in 2026. (ref: International Energy Agency World Energy Outlook reports for 2011-2025 and Ember via

https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/electricity-mix?time=2010..2025&source=total&metric=by_source&frequency=annual).

In addition, the rapid improvements in battery energy storage technology continue to support the growth of solar and wind power by providing an ever-cheaper source of power "firming" for variable sources of electricity. In 2025, 108 GW of new battery storage capacity was deployed worldwide, 40% more than in 2024, eleven times higher than in 2021. (ref: https://www.iea.org/reports/global-energy-review-2026/technology-battery-storage and Lazard LCOE Report https://www.lazard.com/research-insights/financial-advisory/levelized-cost-of-energyplus-lcoeplus/)

Federal research agencies should be responsible for funding research and development on novel grid energy technologies

CRED-NB is concerned that federal funding for research on novel grid energy technologies currently does not meet the highest international standards for research funding. For example, most of the recent funding for research on new nuclear reactor technology to date has been provided by several federal government departments. Their mechanisms for reviewing funding requests are not transparent and do not meet international standards for independent research proposal reviews as well as being subject to political interference. The Tri-Council research agencies have the expertise and capacity to ensure rigorous and independent assessment of research funding requests.

For this reason, we recommend that responsibility for funding research and development of nuclear energy, and all other novel grid energy technologies, should be removed from government departments. Sole responsibility for nuclear research should be vested with the National Research Council and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), institutions with the capacity to independently and properly adjudicate and assess research and development proposals. This will ensure that the research funding process is transparent and reflect the high quality of the Tri-Council agencies.

Conclusion

The urgency to reduce greenhouse gas emission has never been higher. Speed and cost are of the essence as Canada and the world limit the impacts from climate change by transitioning to a net-zero economy and electrical grid. Nuclear energy cannot meet the speed and cost requirements.

Renewable energy technologies provide the most affordable sources of grid power as documented by Lazard and IRENA. In only 15 years, the fast deployment speed of wind and solar has enabled the global generation of electricity from renewables to eclipse that from

nuclear power. Energy modeling points to focusing on renewable energy sources, complemented by appropriate energy storage, as the best way for Canada to meet its 2035 net-zero electricity target.

New Brunswick needs to prepare now to phase out nuclear power when the nuclear plant operating licence expires in 2032. The province should transition to more cost effective and manageable sources of power such as wind and solar backed by storage, transmission and grid modernization.



Tom McLean, Chair
Coalition for Responsible Energy Development in New Brunswick (CRED-NB)