

Great Lakes: Canadian nuclear waste plan opposed by Senate resolution

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U.S. Sen. Carl Levin has introduced a resolution urging the Obama administration to oppose a Canadian proposal to bury radioactive waste less than a mile from Lake Huron.

A federal panel in Canada is taking testimony on the plan to store low- and intermediate-level waste from nuclear power plants in rock chambers more than 2,000 feet below the surface.

Ontario Power Generation proposes storing low- and intermediate-level waste from nuclear power plants in rock chambers at a site in Kincardine, Ontario, about 140 miles north-northeast of Detroit. The utility has said that the lake would be protected.

On its website, the utility said that it "could continue storing the waste safely above ground, but we have an obligation to future generations to dispose of this waste safely and responsibly where it cannot pose a threat to the public or the environment."

Opponents have said that safety can't be guaranteed when the material would remain radioactive for thousands of years.

"Canada's proposed nuclear waste storage facility, less than a mile from Lake Huron, would not only threaten our precious lakes, but it could also be disastrous for the health of our citizens and our economy," Levin, D-Mich., said in a statement Thursday. "For over a century, the U.S.

and Canada have worked together to protect our shared water, and we need to make sure that decisions we make about permanently storing nuclear waste continue our history of careful stewardship of our lakes."

According to the resolution, "more than 40 million people in Canada and the United States depend on the fresh water from the Great Lakes for drinking water" and "a spill of nuclear waste into the Great Lakes could have lasting and severely adverse environmental, health and economic impacts on the Great Lakes and the people that depend on them for their livelihood."

The resolution, co-sponsored by Sens. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich.; Mark Kirk, R-Ill.; and Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., urges President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry "to take appropriate action to work with the Canadian government" to prevent building of a permanent nuclear waste repository within the Great Lakes Basin.

U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee, D-Flint., sponsored a similar measure in the House earlier this month.