

## **ABSTRACT**

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Nuclear Fuel Waste and Aboriginal Concerns, Canada's Nuclear Fuel Waste Management Concept Public Hearings: A Content Analysis

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This thesis examined Aboriginal views on nuclear fuel waste management in Canada and assessed the concerns and issues Aboriginal people are likely to voice at future interactions and deliberations in the next siting phase. A content analysis method was used to examine the entire public record produced during the 1996/1997 Federal Environmental Assessment Review Panel hearings held on the Environmental Impact Statement for the concept of geological disposal of nuclear fuel waste. The content analysis indicated that Aboriginal peoples have continued to express opposition to the geologic disposal concept with intensity and consistency as demonstrated by measures of issue frequency and number of lines expended on each issue in the testimony. Further, the study indicated that native views remained consistent when compared with earlier scoping hearings in 1991, and that their positions were substantively and culturally different than non-native responses to the concept. In addition, two case studies were examined where natives in North America have been confronted with, and expressed views on, nuclear fuel waste storage or disposal, in order to further demonstrate the consistency of native views. The study found that Aboriginal responses have likely influenced the consideration of alternative disposal concepts in the long-standing Canadian nuclear waste management process.