

**SMALL MODULAR REACTORS ROADMAP PUBLISHED ONLINE BY
NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA**

By Stanley Berger

On November 7, 2018 Natural Resources Canada published an on-line roadmap for discussion on small modular reactors ("SMRs") at <https://smrroadmap.ca/>.

Participants in the ongoing discussion include all Canadian nuclear utilities, federal and provincial governments in Ontario, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and various stakeholders. SMRs represent the nuclear industry's effort to reduce the high capital costs and long timelines for regulatory approvals and construction which have plagued projects in the United States, Finland and France over the past decade.

The reactors are smaller than the mega reactors which have been built in recent years, ranging in capacity from 1.5 megawatts to approximately 300 megawatts. Their size and mobility offer opportunities for providing access to electricity in northern communities, some of which are populated by Indigenous Peoples. They may also be advantageous to the mining industry and provide low carbon solutions for empowering energy production in Western Canada.

In an article in the *Globe and Mail's Report on Business* on November 7, 2018 it was reported that through an Access to Information request made by Greenpeace, it was discovered that the nuclear regulator, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, has asked the government to exempt SMRs from the list of designated projects that would receive panel review under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. The Commission would retain the jurisdiction to conduct its own environmental review if their request for exemption for project designation were granted.

SMRs have the potential to reduce regulatory delays in a number of different ways. Given the lower potential for radiation dose, the radius for evacuation in the case of an emergency could be reduced. Nuclear liability insurance is controlled by federal regulations and while full-scale nuclear reactor units are subject to minimum liability cover of 1 billion dollars by 2020, regulations have dictated much lower liability cover for facilities like the former Gentilly reactor in Quebec which now just stores used nuclear fuel but does not have any fuel in a reactor. Issues of course will need to be ironed out such as whether multi-unit SMRs should be treated as one facility for the purposes of nuclear liability.



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