

“Reflections on the intersection of sustainability and nuclear safety from a Canadian public interest perspective”

Pippa Feinstein, JD LLM pippa.d.feinstein@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The intersection of nuclear safety and sustainability marks a crucially important point for meaningful public discourse, nuclear decision-making, and policy development. In Canada, safety lies at the heart of project-specific nuclear decision-making processes. While sustainability tends to be addressed via broader energy planning and policy-making. While the former contains legislated provisions for informed and funded public involvement, the latter does not. Federal and provincial legislative regimes differentiate nuclear safety and sustainability to such an extent that it is exceedingly challenging to address both together in any public forum.

From a Canadian public interest perspective, I identify four prerequisites for joint considerations of nuclear safety and sustainability. First, any use of sustainability as a concept or framework should be consistent with Indigenous relations with, and responsibilities to, land (McGregor, 2021). The same would be true for definitions of nuclear safety. Second, applicable legislative frameworks should permit collaborative overlap between jurisdictions and between considerations of safety and sustainability. Third, a focus on *impacts over risks* would underscore the intersections of sustainability and safety: all facilities interact with the ecologies and societies of which they are a part. Ensuring these interactions are equitable and beneficial should be a key goal for all stakeholders. And lastly, public fora for considering matters of both nuclear safety and sustainability require transparent and participatory processes.

BIOGRAPHY

Pippa Feinstein is a public-interest nuclear regulatory lawyer based in Toronto, Canada and the founder and coordinator of the Nuclear Transparency Project, a Canadian-registered non-profit dedicated to supporting open, informed, and equitable public discourse on nuclear technologies. Pippa is also earning a PhD at Osgoode Hall Law School at York University. Her research examines how Canadian regulation of nuclear infrastructure shapes and is shaped by the ecological and social relations in which it is embedded.