

Kebaowek First Nation and World-Changing Kids Join Forces to Empower Youth and Protect the Ottawa River

Kebaowek First Nation (KFN) and Ottawa-based **World-Changing Kids** (WCK) have begun a meaningful collaboration, to raise awareness, empower youth voices, and mobilize action to protect the Kichi Sibi (the “Ottawa River”).

With hosting support from **MP Leah Gazan** (NDP), the **Upstanders** club at WCK created an official online parliamentary petition to the federal government at <https://www.ourcommons.ca/petitions/> - search for #e-7247 - that asks the *Government of Canada* to issue an order for the *Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission* to revoke Canadian Nuclear Laboratories’ licensing approval for its planned Near Surface Disposal Facility (NSDF) at Chalk River. This project has been very controversial among many sectors of civil society for almost 10 years. The Upstanders’ reasons are set forth in the petition. We also have a print copy of that petition here. With each collection of 25 valid signatures, MP Gazan will be able to rise in the House and read it out in support of the Upstanders’ civic-minded environmental action.

The *World-Changing Kids* organization is dedicated to fostering kindness, leadership, and social justice among young people. Some youth Upstanders comments about this initiative:

- “I don’t want to have to live in a world where the government doesn’t think about the impacts of the people and the environment If we don’t speak up they will continue to violate treaties, our planet and basic human rights. Our voices are what drives change.”
- “To put a NSDF so close to the Ottawa River is so crazy because if there is a leak the Ottawa River would most likely get poisoned. So many animals and humans get the water they need to survive from the Ottawa River. Water is a basic and necessary part of life, to poison that is to also poison us too.”

The Upstanders have created a succinct, researched, and effective presentation about this. Released May 28th, it brilliantly makes the complex issues surrounding radioactive waste, Indigenous rights, environmental protection, and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) more accessible and understandable for younger generations and the broader public. They intend to virtually tour this presentation and welcome teachers, youth, and group leaders reaching out.

Justin Roy, a Kebaowek First Nation councillor and father, emphasized the importance of youth leadership in this collaboration: “Kebaowek is committed to protecting the Kichi Sibi for future generations. Working with young people reminds us that this is not only about today’s decisions, but about the world we are leaving behind. Their voices are powerful, and they are essential to this movement.”

For more information:

World-Changing Kids: search for their website *WORLD-CHANGING KIDS*, or look on Facebook or Instagram; the group facilitator is Lindsey Barr <worldchangingkids@gmail.com>

Kebaowek First Nation: search “Kebaowek First Nation - Raven Trust”; visit their Stop Nuclear Waste website.



