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Nomination for CNS/CNA 2015 Ian McRae Award

Robert S. Walker, PhD, FCAE
President and Chief Executive Officer, CNL and AECL

Substantive Contributions to the Advancement of Nuclear Energy in Canada

Restructuring Canada's Nuclear Laboratories

Dr. Walker has shown extraordinary personal and corporate leadership, and superior management ability as the President and CEO of both AECL and CNL. Beginning in 2010, Bob began the daunting process of strategically transforming Canada's Nuclear Laboratories from the R&D arm of a commercial Crown corporation to a standalone, high-performing national nuclear laboratory, and ready for transition to a government-owned, contractor-operated (GoCo) business model. With great insight, deep science and technology management skill and acute internal communications sensitivity, Bob put into place a new value proposition: a focused vision, a forward-looking mandate and an industry-leading management system for the Labs, working hand in hand with the federal government shareholder. Placing great confidence in Bob's excellent judgment and integrity, the federal government endorsed Bob's approach in terms of a redefined strategic role of the labs to manage Canada's legacy waste liabilities, to advise and support the federal government as nuclear technology expert, as well as to support the Canadian nuclear industry with access to unique lab facilities and world-class expertise. Indications of Bob's success in the journey of successfully transforming the labs include the seamless launch of CNL, the support of CNL's workforce and key industry stakeholders for Bob's bold new vision, the trust and confidence of CNL employees in their CEO, the host communities' trust, respect and admiration for Bob's leadership and concern for local communities, and the unprecedented levels of new public investment and customer interest in the Labs. As a result of Bob's adroit leadership skill in the face of great complexity and many tough challenges, and with his steady hand on the AECL restructuring tiller, CNL has emerged as Canada's premier nuclear science, technology and innovation organization, ready to grow and prosper under private-sector leadership, which will strengthen the performance and competitiveness of the entire Canadian nuclear industry.

Nuclear Leadership Forum

A distinguished and gifted leader with great character and intellectual capacity, as well as a modest human touch, Bob saw the strategic need for all parts of the Canadian Nuclear Industry to come together for the common good. Soon after joining the nuclear industry from a distinguished career in government, and while leading an ambitious restructuring of the nuclear labs, Bob worked to build consensus among the industry's leaders to develop a strategic roadmap to achieve success for the whole Canadian nuclear sector over the long term. In Bob's view the industry should first define its vision, what it wanted to achieve, and how to get there before asking strategic partners, such as governments, for their policy assistance and political support. Over two years of hard work and commitment, supported by the dedicated collective leadership of the nuclear sector, Bob led the creation of a 25-Year Vision and Action Plan for the nuclear sector. The Vision and Action Plan was developed and endorsed by utility CEOs, company presidents, union leaders and nuclear association presidents. The 25-Year Vision and Action Plan focuses on five top-priority action areas where the industry must perform with excellence and leadership in order for Canada to remain as a respected and competitive force in domestic and international nuclear markets. Bob's dedication over two years of brainstorming, discussion, negotiation across our diverse industry components resulted in a long-term Vision and Action Plan that is testimony to his leadership and commitment to the success of our industry.

Today, dedicated Action Teams are defining a strategic and common industry approach to five key success areas: effective project management, an integrated approach to waste management, business success in global markets, a forward-looking science, technology and innovation agenda, and a strategy to ensure we have the human resources needed to drive the industry forward. For his foresight, commitment and dedication to our industry's prosperity and well-being, we owe Dr. Bob Walker a huge debt of gratitude and our sincere thanks.

Professional Background

Dr. Robert Walker was appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) on October 7, 2011. Dr. Walker joined AECL in November 2010 as the Senior Vice-President of AECL's Nuclear Laboratories.

Dr. Walker was also appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of Canadian Nuclear Laboratories Limited (CNL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of AECL, effective November 3, 2014.

Dr. Walker has had a distinguished career in the Government of Canada, with more than 25 years of leadership experience in science and technology management and 10 years of experience in conducting defence research and exploratory development, both at progressively senior levels.

Prior to joining AECL, Dr. Walker was the Assistant Deputy Minister of Science and Technology at the Department of National Defence (DND) and the Chief Executive Officer of Defence Research and Development Canada. He was also the Federal Government's executive responsible for coordinating its public safety science and technology activities.

For the period April 2009 to 2012, Dr. Walker served as the Chairman of the NATO Research and Technology Board, the senior oversight body for cooperative research within the NATO framework. He is presently the Chair of the Board for the Network of Centres of Excellence in Marine Environmental Observation, Prediction and Response (MEOPAR), hosted by Dalhousie University. Dr. Walker also serves as the Governance Chair of the Canadian Nuclear Association Board of Directors and as member of the Executive Committee.

Dr. Walker earned a B.Sc. in Physics from Acadia University, an M. Eng. in Engineering Physics and a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from McMaster University. In 2013, McMaster University awarded Dr. Walker with an honorary Doctor of Science degree. He is a graduate of the National Defence College and a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Engineering. Dr. Walker is the recipient of the Canadian Forces Medallion for Distinguished Service, the highest honour awarded to civilian employees by DND.

I believe that Dr. Robert Walker would be a deserving recipient the CNS 2015 Ian McRae Award.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Ron Oberth
President