

## **For Immediate Release**

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Fredericton, NB

### **Nuclear Safety Commission Denies NB Groups Right to Hold Lepreau Hearing in New Brunswick: Canadian Senators Misled about Safety Reports**

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commissioner (CNSC) has denied the request of over twenty New Brunswick public interest groups to move a hearing for extending the Point Lepreau operating licence to New Brunswick, instead of Ottawa. The group is asking that the people who are actually affected by decisions about Lepreau be allowed the opportunity to fully participate, make presentations in person and clarify conflicting reports about the Lepreau refurbishment at the hearing.

While most Canadians were swept up in holiday activities, members of the concerned groups stayed at their desks to ask CNSC, senators and elected officials to stand up for them and ensure that the hearings are held in the province. The Commission set a December 20, 2010 deadline for accepting public comments and told group members that it will only allow written submissions. However, NB Power is scheduled to make an oral presentation at the hearing.

The Point Lepreau Decommissioning Caucus has been speaking out publicly since the 2010 provincial election and maintains that refurbishing Lepreau is a waste of public funds and an ongoing safety hazard. In 2002, the New Brunswick Public Utilities Board concluded that "there is no significant economic advantage" in refurbishing Lepreau and "is not in the public interest." The Caucus is attracting more supporters who question whether the refurbishment can ever be safely completed.

Recent statements by Canadian Senators are raising confusion about the hearing process. On December 13, 2010, Senator Michael Meighen asked the Senate Government Leader Marjorie LeBreton to persuade the Minister of Natural Resources to have the location of the hearing changed from Ottawa to Saint John, "so that those most affected by the decision will be able to participate directly." LeBreton responded that the Lepreau hearings are only considering "already approved activities" under the existing licence. However, both NB Power and CNSC admit that there are new concerns from the refurbishment itself. In fact, CNSC staff report that the Commission will not be reviewing plans for long term corrective action at Lepreau until March 2011, two months after the January license extension hearing.

Point Lepreau Decommissioning Caucus member David Thompson of Fundy Baykeeper maintains that "In denying reasonable opportunity to participate by those who

stand to be most affected, CNSC is not actually holding a public hearing, but just attempting to give the illusion that they are doing so. Without public hearings held in New Brunswick, which are accessible to anyone who wishes to make their information, views and opinions known to the Nuclear Safety Commission, the current exercise being held is little more than a rubber stamp for business as usual.”

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attached: letter to CNSC from 20+ groups, 13 Dec 2010 Senate Debate.