

Uranium Rules Not Enough: Government needs to ban uranium and overhaul the outdated N.B. Mining Act

July 24, 2008

For Immediate Release

Over thirty citizen environmental groups are renewing calls to immediately ban uranium exploration and mining in the province.

"While we applaud added protections to watersheds, the government is missing the point. In light of long-term radiological dangers from drill cores, trenching and bulk sampling, we want a ban on uranium exploring in New Brunswick. Several municipalities and groups have issued calls to ban uranium exploration and mining and it's time for the government to listen," stated Inka Milewski, Health Watch Director and Science Advisor for the Conservation Council of New Brunswick.

"There are several flaws in the new uranium rules. The move from blue ribbon staking to an electronic claims staking system will keep property owners in the dark about any claims made on their property. This is especially worrisome for those who do not have online access to the information," stated Randy Nason of the Grand Lake Watershed Guardians.

Environmental groups are encouraging the government to genuinely include the public in their review of the N.B.'s outdated Mining Act. "Public participation processes lead to regulations that best reflect public concerns. Nova Scotia, Quebec and Ontario have conducted recent public participation processes in reviews of their mining regulations. We demand no less," stated Nason.

"The Mining Act should be amended to include required consultation with members of the public including municipalities, landowners, Aboriginal people, ecologists and environmental organizations at all phases of mining including claim staking," added Nason.

"Besides mandatory public consultation, the public would be surprised to learn that quarries and exploration do not require Environmental Impact Assessments in this province. Since all mining activities and phases involve an environmental impact, we want to see it all subject to an EIA," stated Inka Milewski.

"There is only one inspector in the Department of Natural Resources and more than 38,000 claims. The Department needs more resources to properly inspect sites. Uranium exploration guidelines announced last month should be turned into enforceable standards and regularly monitored. The government must also undertake a cost-benefits analysis of exploration that includes the impacts to our valuable ecosystem services," added Milewski.

Inka Milewski, Health Watch Director and Science Advisor, Conservation Council of New Brunswick, 506 622-2460

Randy Nason, Grand Lake Watershed Guardians, 506 339-5448

In Fredericton, Tracy Glynn, Conservation Council of NB, 506 458-8747 (available after 12 noon)

See list of groups endorsing uranium ban here: <http://nuclearfreenb.org/2008/05/13/a-responsible-stand-against-uranium-mining-in-new-brunswick/>