

To endorse the Campaign for a Nuclear Free New Brunswick statement below, email:
energy@conservationcouncil.ca

THE CAMPAIGN FOR A NUCLEAR FREE NEW BRUNSWICK

The Campaign for a Nuclear Free New Brunswick is supported by a group of concerned citizens opposed to nuclear activity in the province of New Brunswick including uranium exploration and mining, and nuclear power generation.

Uranium exploration companies have staked many acres of land in New Brunswick, including in and around communities of Hoyt and Cambridge Narrows, within the province's capital city limits as well as in the Turtle Creek watershed area, which supplies Moncton with drinking water.

Scientific evidence and history tells us that uranium mining and exploration represents irreversible consequences to the health of our ecosystems, watersheds, wildlife, agriculture and recreation, and communities nearby, downstream or down-wind. Uranium mining and milling produces huge volumes of long-lived radioactive tailings. Radioactive by-products including thorium-230, radium-226 and radon-222 are formed as uranium atoms slowly disintegrate over billions of years. These radioactive elements can easily enter the environment from unstable uranium mill tailings where they can stay for 100,000 years. People living near uranium tailings receive significant increases to exposure to radioactive elements that are linked to serious health conditions such as various cancers and reproductive health conditions. Pin-cushion drilling, used in advanced exploration, may cause radon contamination of groundwater and requires no special permits, despite no evidence that this practice is safe. Meanwhile, there are still no solutions to environmental and health problems associated with uranium mining and long-term management of huge volumes of environmentally hazardous tailings.

NUCLEAR POWER IS NOT AN OPTION

New Brunswick already has one nuclear power plant, Point Lepreau, located in the Saint John area. The Point Lepreau reactor will be shut down in April 2008 for a scheduled refurbishment. A second nuclear reactor is being proposed in the same area with the results of a feasibility study looming. The Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, which is also a body with a vested interest in developing new nuclear plants, will decide whether a second reactor is feasible. A favourable feasibility study is therefore expected despite numerous risks and unanswered questions.

NUCLEAR POWER IS DIRTY

The Canadian Nuclear Association falsely claims that nuclear is "clean," and produces no greenhouse gas emissions. This is not true. The nuclear fuel cycle from uranium mining, milling and enrichment to nuclear reactor construction, decommissioning and spent fuel transportation and storage all depend on fossil fuels. The expansion of nuclear power would require mining more and more lower grade ore, which would require even more fossil fuels.

NUCLEAR POWER IS DANGEROUS

The nuclear lobby also claims that nuclear power is safe, but there is no safe level of radiation, which nuclear power at some point releases into the environment in the form of uranium tailings and reactor wastes. Not one nuclear spent fuel rod has been permanently disposed of anywhere in the world. Nuclear power is inextricably tied to unacceptable risks: the proliferation of nuclear arms, the creation of a potential terrorist target, and the very real possibility of a catastrophic nuclear accident. The current nuclear power plant in New Brunswick is of further concern given its location at Point Lepreau; near an earthquake fault line. While nuclear power generation has been ruled out in jurisdictions around the world for reasons of safety, the dangers to New Brunswickers have been deemed acceptable as a mere cost of production. Plans for a second reactor in New Brunswick would be dedicated solely to energy exports to the U.S.

NUCLEAR POWER RELIES ON NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES

Nuclear power depends on uranium, which is a non-renewable resource that will eventually run out if exploited. Transition to renewable energy (solar, wind, tidal) free from toxic waste generation is needed immediately.

NUCLEAR POWER IS UNAFFORDABLE

Even without a level playing field in the energy market, energy efficiency, co-generation and wind are already least-cost options to coal and nuclear. If we stop nuclear from robbing scarce capital from making the conversion to renewables, other renewable sources will quickly become both practical and economically feasible. Several studies, including a study done by the New Scientist, have found that the true costs of nuclear are underestimated by a factor of three. If the huge subsidies going to nuclear (an estimated 75 billion dollars so far in Canada) were removed, the cost of electricity from nuclear plants would rise 300%. Besides being extremely capital-intensive, nuclear, including its front-end uranium mining, produces very little employment per amount invested. Each job in uranium mining involves \$750,000 or more of capital. Uranium mining has delivered very little of the royalties originally promised to the province of Saskatchewan, where uranium was mined. Only one-half of the jobs promised to northern Indigenous people were actually created. Several studies confirmed that a renewable energy sector produces many more jobs. Wind, like solar, produces 5 times the employment per amount invested.

NUCLEAR POWER IS UNETHICAL

Uranium mined in Canada has been used to make nuclear weapons, although many Canadians are not aware of this. Depleted Uranium (D.U.) present in waste generated from mining uranium is being illegally shipped from Canada to the U.S. to make very toxic bullets. D.U. weapons have been used by the U.S. in several war zones since 1991 and are responsible for rising birth deformations and childhood cancers in Iraq. The Canadian uranium mining industry, Canadian government and other supporters are therefore complicit in what is called a low level nuclear war. According to an August 2002 report by the U.N. Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, use of D.U. weapons breaches the U.N. Charter, the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights, the Genocide Convention, the Convention against Torture, the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, the Conventional Weapons Convention of 1980 and the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, which expressly forbid employing “poison or poisoned weapons” and “arms, projectiles, or materials calculated to cause unnecessary suffering.”

New Brunswick’s policies need to move towards the decentralized production of safe and clean renewable energy resources and away from a polluting non-renewable resource based economy. New Brunswick is already known as having Canada’s third highest per capita greenhouse gas emission rate.

Based on the aforementioned facts, the Campaign for a Nuclear Free New Brunswick demands:

1. A permanent ban on uranium exploration and mining in New Brunswick.
2. Abandonment of plans for nuclear power expansion.
3. Immediate phase out of existing nuclear programs including the abandonment of plans to refurbish the Point Lepreau reactor.

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The following organizations have endorsed the Campaign for a Nuclear Free New Brunswick:

Bantry Bay Farm, St. Andrew’s, NB
Campaign for Pesticide Reduction, NB
Canaan-Washademoak Watershed Association
Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice – NB Chapter
Conservation Council of New Brunswick
Fredericton Peace Coalition
International Institute of Concern for Public Health
Knowledge is Power Collective
Mobilization – a student/community social justice group in Fredericton
People for a New Perspective on Energy – PANE
Petitcodiac Riverkeeper
Sierra Club of Canada
SOS Eau Water Sankwan

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