The Problems with Nuclear Power

Conservation Council *of* New Brunswick
Conseil de conservation *du* Nouveau-Brunswick

1. **A Barrier to a Sustainable Electricity Future** - Expenditures on nuclear power programs are so expensive that conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy programs are necessarily undermined as limited capital and political will are diverted to the promotion and maintenance of nuclear power.

2. **Irreversible Damage to Ecosystems and Health** - Major accidents like Chernobyl are possible with any nuclear reactor. Major industrial accidents of any sort can cause deaths and injuries, but a major nuclear accident causes irreversible damage to ecosystems and continues to harm people through cancers and other chronic disease. While the nuclear industry claims the probabilities of such catastrophic accidents are small, the consequences are so great and long-term, they render the risks associated with nuclear technology unacceptable. It is the horrific consequences of a nuclear accident which make nuclear power plants a target for terrorism.

3. **Extreme Costs** - Nuclear energy is the most expensive conventional source of generating electricity and far more expensive than conservation, energy efficiency and co-generation alternatives. According to evidence tabled by NB Power before the Public Utilities Board during its hearings into the proposed refurbishment of Point Lepreau, by 2006 the lifetime costs of providing electricity from that nuclear power plant will have amounted to just under 11 cents/kwh. NB Power only earns 5 cents/kwh from its industrial sales and 8 cents/kwh from residential sales. The capital costs of building a nuclear plant are extreme, its operating and maintenance costs are high, as are its waste management and decommissioning costs. NB Power had to borrow $125 million to provide the federal nuclear regulatory with a $750 million financial guarantee to cover radioactive waste management and reactor decommissioning costs.

4. **Radioactive Wastes** - Radioactive wastes remain hazardous for 250,000 year. We do not know how to destroy or neutralize them. They simply must be stored in perpetuity. Point Lepreau has produced close to 2,000 tons of these highly toxic and radioactive wastes.

5. **Radioactive Pollution** - There is mounting evidence that the daily routine emissions of radioactive pollution from nuclear power plants increase the risk of childhood leukemia and genetic damage among people living nearby.

6. **Dirty Power** - In addition to the daily emissions of radioactive pollutants and the generation of highly toxic and radioactive waste, the production of the fuel has a huge environmental footprint, beginning with radium contaminated water and radon polluted air from uranium mine tailings.

7. **Least Effective Investment for Fighting Global Warming** - To spend money on building nuclear power plants deflects huge amounts of money from far more effective investments to combat global warming such as those in conservation, energy efficiency, fuel switching from electric heating, and co-generation.

8. **Inequitable Job Creation** - Spending on nuclear mega-projects creates a boom-bust cycle in the provincial economy, concentrating job creation in one location of the province. Investments in conservation, energy efficiency, co-generation and renewables create more jobs which are spread more evenly across the entire province.

9. **Nuclear Proliferation** - The export of nuclear technology overseas increases the probability of the proliferation of nuclear weapons as materials and technology can be diverted from nuclear reactors to nuclear weapons' production.

For more info: www: http://conservationcouncil.ca/