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January 23, 2008

John Gerretsen  
Minister for the Environment  
Main Legislative Building  
Room 281, Queens Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Mr. Gerretsen

**Re: Uranium mining, your ministry's vision, and the free-entry system**

I received a letter from your ministry, dated December 3, 2007 (written by Agatha Garcia-Wright of your ministry), in response to my letter of November 6, on the topic of **Donna Dillman's call for a moratorium on uranium mining and exploration in Ontario**.

I appreciate your taking the time and effort to respond to my letter; no other ministry has responded, though it was sent to Premier Dalton McGuinty himself, and cc'd to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Health Promotion, and Randy Hillier, our MPP for this riding.

Thank you for sending me the link to the Ministry of Energy's website for their energy strategies and vision. I will review it.

With regard to your own ministry's vision, "An Ontario with clean and safe air, land and water that contributes to healthy communities, ecological protection and sustainable development for present and future generations," from <http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/publications/6189e.php>, this issue of uranium mining is very much about clean and safe air, land and water that contribute to healthy communities. Given this, naturally your response to my letter was somewhat puzzling, since it did not address healthy communities, ecological protection or sustainable development for present and future generations; rather, the letter pointed to various acts, regulations, policies and procedures. Certainly these are important in providing a process for protecting our environment, but the letter does not address or spell out the incongruity of allowing uranium exploration or mining, and the vision of healthy communities, ecological protection and sustainable development.

I am thankful to MiningWatch Canada; an incredible resource to those of us who are concerned about uranium mining, in helping to inform me. This organization is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of a range of experts, community leaders and activists from across Canada. MiningWatch Canada carries out and/or supports the monitoring, analysis and advocacy necessary to affect the behaviour of industry and public decision-makers, and it is the research they have gathered and compiled on this issue that I reference. Thank goodness for independent research and advocacy groups.

I support MiningWatch Canada's position that there is very little public support in Canada for the use of uranium for weaponry, and that medical and scientific technology uses could be well served by existing stockpiles of uranium. I believe this to be true. I also believe nuclear energy generation does not justify mining uranium in Ontario, or anywhere in the world, given the risks, waste management, and the poor cost-benefit performance of nuclear energy.

MiningWatch Canada takes the position that ***there should be a total moratorium on uranium exploration and new uranium mines across Canada*** until such time as:

- *There is a full, well informed, and serious public debate and national consensus regarding energy policy, and the role of nuclear energy as part of this overall energy policy;*
- *The destructive environmental legacy of past and existing uranium mining has been cleaned up and permanently neutralized, and the people who have suffered injury to their health from involvement in or exposure to uranium mining and processing have been adequately compensated individually and collectively; and*
- *There is a sound, long term, economically feasible, scientifically demonstrated, and publicly acceptable means of isolating radioactive wastes (from the mining, processing, and use of uranium) from the environment and from human communities.*

Let me be clear: I agree with MiningWatch Canada's position on uranium mining. I strongly encourage you to read their policy statement on uranium mining: [http://www.miningwatch.ca/index.php?/Uranium/Uranium\\_Policy](http://www.miningwatch.ca/index.php?/Uranium/Uranium_Policy).

Given there is little reason why uranium mining should continue in Ontario, and especially given that this activity is in apparent direct conflict with your ministry's own vision of a "clean and safe air, land and water that contributes to healthy communities, ecological protection and sustainable development for present and future generations," will the Ministry of Environment and the Government of Ontario support a total moratorium on uranium exploration and mining in Ontario immediately?

The Robertsville mine in North Frontenac is not the only place in Ontario causing communities to struggle with uranium exploration and mining: across the province and country, citizens are working together to protect themselves from new uranium mines and exploration. I am aware of the struggles with uranium exploration and mining near Thunder Bay by the people of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, who are apparently being sued \$10 billion by Platinex Inc., a junior mining company, who wish to drill on their customary homelands. This is putting the First Nation in serious financial jeopardy, as they try to block this company and keep up with legal fees. It is really quite appalling and unacceptable that your government not only allows this to continue, but is seen to be siding with the company. Will the ministry allow this to happen to more communities in Ontario, or will it support a total moratorium on uranium mining and exploration in Ontario immediately?

My last question for your government concerns the free entry system, also known as the free miner or location system. Ontario's Mining Act and the system of free entry allow miners privileges and rights to enter, occupy and use private lands in search of subsurface minerals, in some parts of Ontario. The activities often involve tree cutting, dredging, trenching, and road building on the property, wrecking the surface lands, quite understandably against landowners' wishes. Aside from the actual problems with uranium mining itself, it is this system of free entry that is causing many of the problems with uranium mining in Ontario today. I am sure that this government – and any reasonable person – would agree that this archaic system should be written out of the Ontario Mining Act. Will your government amend the Ontario Mining Act to no longer allow a free entry system?

Thank you again for your response to my earlier letter. I look forward to your timely response to this letter.

Sincerely,

Kate Maddigan

- c. Donna Dillman  
Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation  
Mining Watch Canada  
Premier Dalton McGuinty  
Michael Gravelle  
Minister of Northern Development and Mines  
Donna Cansfield  
Minister of Natural Resources  
Margarett Best  
Minister of Health Promotion  
Randy Hillier, MPP  
Lanark--Frontenac--Lennox and Addington