

## CITIZENS INQUIRY

Re: Uranium Mining

Sharbot Lake

1 April 2008

Good afternoon. Thank you for holding this inquiry and for giving us citizens an opportunity to speak publicly on the matter of uranium mining. It is unfortunate that our elected government is not as willing to hear what we have to say.

I am a local resident. I moved to this area over 20 years ago. I have raised my family here. I have made it my home. I am still raising my family here – I now have a grandchild as well - and I run a successful accounting practice in this community. I do not have any intentions of leaving.

I am speaking today on behalf of my family and on behalf of many of my friends and neighbours who were, for whatever reason, unable to be here today. People who I have spoken to on this issue, representing a broad range of the local community, are almost unanimous in their opposition to the proposed uranium exploration and mining in this area.

Uranium exploration and mining anywhere in North Frontenac or Lanark County and the surrounding area poses a direct threat to the health and well being of my family and our entire community. I am not assuaged by the assurances of the nuclear industry and government that uranium is safe. As the geologist for Frontenac Ventures stated at a public meeting held in Almonte last year, "uranium is uranium". I do not need to be a scientist or enter into a debate about the science of it to understand radiation, cancer and half-lives of hundreds of thousands of years. The nuclear industry is not impartial. They are trying to sell a product. Government should be impartial, but it is not. It is clearly in the hand of the nuclear industry trying to sell us nuclear power.

I do not believe that uranium can be safely mined. I think that we should have learned by now that uranium is a substance that we should not be messing with at all.

Unfortunately, though, I believe that we are mere pawns in a global, high stakes game of mineral and military madness. Nuclear power is touted as the answer to global warming, but it is the solution of shortsighted people looking for quick answers. We need to be willing to discard old, costly ways of doing things and embrace real alternatives that do not leave us with 100,000 year-old legacies.

Some people, unfortunately, are prepared to do anything for money and right now there is money to be made from uranium. But I am not prepared to sacrifice this community to the scourge of uranium mining and I think citizens should have a say over the type of development that occurs in their communities. It is shameful that our elected provincial government has not responded to the calls from all the surrounding municipalities, including the cities of Ottawa and Kingston, for a moratorium on uranium mining.

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I do not wish uranium mining on any community. We can do without it. We have to learn to do without it. The nuclear industry should be made to work with what it's got and figure out how to deal with the mess that it has created before continuing with any new developments, not to mention paying for the debts that it has downloaded onto Ontario taxpayers.

Then there is the military dimension alluded to earlier. Let us not forget that this is a driving force behind the nuclear industry as well. Do we want to be supporting that? I, for one, do not. I am already appalled by the prevalence of violence and war in our world and have long since discarded the notion that the military can bring us, or anyone, peace. Violence leads to more violence, death and killing to more death and killing. We have enough nuclear weaponry. How can we need any more?

The nuclear industry, government and other proponents of uranium mining and nuclear power dangle the 'jobs' carrot as a way of getting communities onside in their money making scheme. However, do we really want to trade the health and well being of present and future generations and the very land on which we all depend, for a short-term job? We would lose, amongst other things, what has become a vibrant tourism industry and all the spin-offs of that. As an accountant, I see all kinds of micro-economic activity. But here, people still have a relationship with the land. People come to settle here because they want to be closer to the land and what it has to offer. As I've said before, none of this is worth sacrificing.

I have been encouraged by the widespread and sustained opposition to this madness in our backyard. Unfortunately, we cannot trust our politicians to do the right thing because they are too caught up in the world of power and money, so it is up to us, the people, to say "no" and we will have to continue to say 'no' until we are heard.

Thank you.

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