

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION FOR THE MONTH of October 2007

WHO TO WRITE AND WHAT TO ASK FOR: Please contact Ontario's Premier Dalton McGuinty, Canada's Minister of Natural Resources, the Hon. Gary Lunn, and BC Minister of Mines, Richard Neufeld to let them know nuclear power is not a safe or cost-effective way to reduce Canada's GHG emissions.

Ask Premier McGuinty for a moratorium on uranium exploration and mining, to protect the health of people and other creatures in Ontario and to respect the rights of the first nations who have claims on the lands being explored in eastern Ontario. Tell him that an Öko Institut study last year found improving a nation's energy efficiency would produce far less CO₂ than a new nuclear plant (5 grams vs. 32 grams per kilowatt-hour). It would do so at lower cost (4.8 cents vs. 5.2 cents per kilowatt-hour). Amory Lovins, chairman of the Rocky Mountain Institute, explains, "It's easy to show that building more reactors makes climate change worse than it should have been. That's because a dollar put into new reactors gives two to 10 times less climate solution for the amount of coal-power displaced than if you had bought cheaper solutions with the same dollars."

In other words, there is no justification for Ontario to jeopardize the health of its people and ecosystems by allowing uranium exploration and mining, when it has not even come close to taking full advantage of the conservation and renewable options that would go much further to solving its energy problems.

Write to Gary Lunn, ask him if he will redirect federal subsidies from the fossil fuel and nuclear sectors, which are not renewable, towards renewable energy sources and conservation programs. Explain, since we do not yet have and are likely never to have a satisfactory solution for the problem of nuclear waste, it is unconscionable to subsidize nuclear industries. (According to a study by David Martin and David Argue, which AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada) has never refuted, Canada spent \$1,674,100,000 to subsidize its nuclear industry in the year of the study, 1997. Cumulative subsidies over the entire history of Canada's nuclear program are, of course, much higher.)

BC once had a uranium exploration and mining moratorium. Tell BC's Minister of Mines, Richard Neufeld this moratorium needs to be renewed in order to protect citizens and the environment from radioactive contamination.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND:

The Ardoch Algonquin and Shabot Obaadijwan First Nations started a blockade of the uranium exploration activities of Frontenac Ventures Corporation on June 29, 2007. On Aug. 31, the corporation was granted an injunction to stop the blockade, but protesters shouted down the reading of the injunction and the OPP has shown sensitivity to the underlying native rights issues by not forcibly removing protesters.

Dalton McGuinty is to be applauded for setting up the Ipperwash Inquiry, which came out with recommendations on respecting native rights on May 31, 2007, almost 12 years after native protester Dudley George was killed by an OPP officer after an occupation of disputed land at Ipperwash Provincial Park. It would be useful now to thank McGuinty for presumably directing the OPP to refrain from arresting or assaulting protesters and to urge him to act quickly to implement the report's recommendations.

Some of you may have seen Donna Dillman on the CBC news. She's the "Grandma" who started a hunger strike on Thanksgiving Day, in an effort to step up the urgency of calls for a moratorium on uranium exploration and mining, at least in eastern Ontario. As can be imagined, she is feeling weak and has very little energy by now. She told reporters recently that she is willing to die for this cause.

Her husband, who many people may know as the author of Life, Money and Illusion and other publications promoting sustainability, has written about the importance of finding renewable energy sources and protecting future generations from nuclear waste:

"Sooner or later we are going to have to pay respect to what the Earth and Sun offer on an ongoing basis. Nuclear energy is only tempting us to think that we can ignore this responsibility. Were we to shift our electricity demand to nuclear power, uranium reserves would be depleted in 30 to 40 years. Then, the grandchildren would find themselves saddled with the same problems we are trying to avoid today, except that the problems would be far worse. The resources available for working on solutions would be diminished and there would be quantities of radioactive waste, here, there and about, to haunt them for tens of thousands of years to come."

Even though most people who are signed up for these action alerts live far from Ontario, we feel it is important to support this struggle in eastern Ontario, which has been given nation-wide attention.

In BC, a Uranium Free BC Coalition was formed recently in response to renewed activity at the Blizzard claim just south of Kelowna. According to an article by Dan Crawford, many parts of BC were explored for uranium in the 70's. He writes: "Out of concern, citizens of BC conducted a Public Inquiry into Uranium Mining. Surprisingly, the project was partially funded by the provincial government to appease demands from the public. This inquiry was then shut down before completion by the very same government. At the same time, the government placed a seven-year moratorium on uranium mining within the province. A general view shared by those involved is that the government did not want the research that was being conducted by the Inquiry to be made available in the public domain."

Letters to Minister of Mines, Richard Neufeld supporting the Uranium Free BC calls for an immediate renewal of the moratorium on uranium exploration and mining in BC, would be helpful.

ADDRESSES:

Premier Dalton McGuinty
Constituency Office
1975 Kilborn Ave, Ottawa, ON K1H 6N1
613-736-9573

The Hon. Gary Lunn 1-800-667-9188
1-9843 Second St., Sidney, BC, V8L 3C7 1-800-667-9188
OR House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Minister of Mines Richard Neufeld
Legislative Buildings
Victoria, BC
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Note: for more information on the situation in eastern Ontario, you can visit the Community Coalition Against Uranium Mining website at: <http://www.ccamu.ca/>.