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## Bathurst resident sends petition against nuclear waste storage to the Premier

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A Bathurst resident has collected over 1,000 names to a petition against storing nuclear waste in the province. James Risdon sent the petition to Premier Shawn Graham on June 16th.

Risdon, who ran unsuccessfully for Mayor of Bathurst in the last municipal election, says it's bordering on insanity to put a second nuclear reactor at Point Lepreau, which will create more nuclear waste--waste that he says cannot presently be safely stored.

"Last year, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization began to look for a place to put all the nuclear garbage we already have in Canada. One of the places they seriously considered was New Brunswick," said Risdon.

"This is unacceptable. Nuclear waste is radioactive. Radioactivity is a cause of deformities, cancer and death. Transporting nuclear waste to New Brunswick could result in accidents causing contamination that would harm New Brunswickers and contaminate our lands and watersheds," he said. "We don't even know the long term impact of storing large amounts of nuclear waste deep in the ground. What are we going to do if this toxic waste comes spewing out of the ground after an earthquake? New Brunswick has already had earthquakes as powerful as those in the western United States."

Risdon began circulating the petition against storing nuclear waste in New Brunswick in the summer of 2009. The petition calls on Premier Shawn Graham and Members of the Legislative Assembly as well as all the mayors in New Brunswick to reject any plans to locate a centralized nuclear waste facility in the province.

The nuclear industry took a hit in June when the Canadian Advertising Standards Association ruled that it is inaccurate and unsupportable to call Candu reactors, like the one at Lepreau, "emission free."

Risdon is disappointed by the news that the government of New Brunswick has signed a Letter of Intent with Areva, a multinational from France, to discuss building a second nuclear reactor at Lepreau. Risdon would like the province to instead move towards renewable energy. "Wind power, solar and tidal energy should all be more seriously examined as ways of creating cleaner energy and de-centralizing the energy grid," said Risdon.

Nuclear energy is the most expensive energy ever produced in New Brunswick and like all nuclear plants around the world, requires large subsidies to operate. NB Power had to borrow \$125 million to provide the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, the federal nuclear regulatory body, with a \$750 million financial guarantee to cover radioactive waste management and reactor decommissioning costs. Delays with the refurbishment of Lepreau are costing New Brunswickers millions of dollars.

Raphael Shay, Energy Coordinator at the Conservation Council, says, "rather than spending about 21¢/kWh on new nuclear, we could be spending 3¢/kWh saved through conservation and efficiency, and 9-13¢/kWh for new hydro and wind power. We would be avoiding the long list of problems with nuclear power and we would be providing jobs across the province."

The [Campaign for a Nuclear Free New Brunswick](#) was launched in 2008 in light of the uranium staking and exploration in the province. The Campaign, including organizations such as the [Conservation Council of New Brunswick](#), not only called for a ban on uranium activity but also an immediate phase out of all nuclear activity in the province.

Uranium deposits in New Brunswick are not particularly rich but many residents of New Brunswick are concerned that uranium mining could one day come to the province in light of predictions that uranium reserves will be depleted in 70 years (or 35 years if the nuclear industry expands). The depletion of rich deposits means the industry will look to other sources for uranium. Critics of uranium activity warn that lower grade uranium deposits in New Brunswick could mean more waste is generated in the province to get comparable amounts of uranium.