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## Heed N.B. voices on new nuclear power

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Dr. Patrick Moore's presentation in Fredericton was certainly informative, and to some extent intriguing. As MIT Professor of Linguistics and political activist Noam Chomsky has pointed out, it takes a lot of skill to seamlessly blend truth with half-truth, and I would have needed pages of notes to keep track of the shifting sands of truth during Dr. Moore's presentation, for which he is paid by the nuclear industry.

He carefully crafts the argument that we need nuclear energy as the insurance policy to provide for our energy needs, and to fend off global climate change, which he then qualifies as not so bad, or inevitable, not really our fault, none or all of the above. How conveniently vague.

The carbon dioxide emitted from the whole nuclear fuel process, which includes mining and refining, reactor building and decommissioning, and transport and storage, has been widely estimated to be one third that of natural gas, not the negligible amount that he asserts.

He also blithely dismissed my points about the report of the U.S. Surgeon-General, which estimated half of all lung cancers in the U.S. were caused by radon gas from the entire uranium fuel process, as well as a strongly worded report by the B.C. Medical Association, which led that province to halt uranium mining there.

Dr. Moore asks us not to confuse nuclear bomb production, which he admits is evil, to the benign production of energy. But depleted uranium from reactors has been used by the U.S. military in artillery rounds and other ammunition since the '91 Gulf War, and has left a legacy of various cancers and disease among the civilians, and in soldiers from both sides of the conflict. While Canada and the nuclear industry are complicit in turning their eyes from a war crime, can we continue to do so?

To give Dr. Patrick Moore some credit, he does outline some sound policy directions for the future, which include conservation and efficiency, ground-source heat-pumps, and renewable energy. But in also advocating an aggressive nuclear energy program, he ignores some key problems such as:

\*the limited supply of uranium, coupled with increasing world demand and rising cost as supplies dwindle;

\*the escalating costs of treating all the wastes and reactor decommissioning, which the nuclear industry continues to low-ball or ignore; and,

\*the mine tailings themselves, which account for the largest source of radioactivity, with a half-life of 75,000 years, and large tailing ponds, which are very difficult to contain without leakage to the nearby environment.

In Jim Harding's book *Canada's Deadly Secret* we see a history of manipulation, cover-up, and a see-no-evil approach to the history of the nuclear industry in Canada and Saskatchewan. We have our own solid critics here in New Brunswick, and we shouldn't take their warnings for granted.

There are a number of groups representing scientists, academics, professionals and environmentalists who have already done the work of mapping out a sound blueprint for our society to achieve energy sustainability and avoid a climate catastrophe. Sweden, a northern country like ours, has already made

the commitment to pursue this path, free of nuclear energy, and in 15 years, free of fossil fuels. But then, it was not the politicians who really decided - it was the people, and the lesson lies there.