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# End the Nuclear Industry in Saskatchewan, Canada

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All Members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

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(Regina) Citizens for a Nuclear-Free Society

Saskatchewan's policies are holding back decentralized energy production and still emphasize an economy based on exporting polluting and toxic non-renewables such as oil and uranium. We are not only known as the main world region for exporting radioactivity (uranium), but for having Canada's highest per capita greenhouse gases (GHGs) emissions. Saskatchewan has an important choice to make in the near future. Will we expand the costly and dangerous nuclear fuel system with a uranium refinery and perhaps a nuclear waste dump? Will we support nuclear power for the Alberta tar sands? This will do nothing to avert global warming, though some big business would make huge profits. But it will rob capital and labour from truly making the urgent conversion to a sustainable, renewable energy system. And, it will condemn future generations to accumulating radioactive wastes while failing to help make the necessary transition needed to avert catastrophic climate change. We ask that on the basis of the following facts, Saskatchewan abandon plans for nuclear expansion, and phase out its existing nuclear program:

## Nuclear Energy is not Green

The Canadian Nuclear Association falsely claims that nuclear is clean, and produces no GHGs. This is not true: From mining to milling to enrichment, from reactor construction to decommissioning and spent fuel transportation and storage, nuclear uses vast amounts of fossil fuels. Saskatchewan uranium exported to its biggest customer - the U.S. - is enriched by two dirty coal plants. The expansion of nuclear would require mining more and more of the lower grade ore, which would require even more fossil fuels.

## Nuclear Radiation is Forever

There is no safe level of radiation, which the nuclear industry spreads in our environment in the form of uranium tailings to reactor wastes. Plutonium remains toxic for 800 generations, which is five times the period it took humans to populate the planet after our ancestors left northern Africa some 50,000 years ago. And not one spent fuel rod has yet been permanently disposed of anywhere in the world. In addition, any expansion of nuclear power increases the chances of a catastrophic nuclear accident.

## Saskatchewan Uranium Used in Weaponry

And while nuclear is not a magic bullet for global warming, it is used in very toxic bullets. We now know that all of the depleted uranium (DU) left from the enrichment of uranium exported from Saskatchewan to the U.S. is available to the U.S. military for weapons use. Depleted uranium (DU) left from enrichment of Saskatchewan uranium is raw material for the U.S. to make DU bullets, which have been used in several war zones since 1991, and are already responsible for rising birth deformations and childhood cancers in Iraq. Saskatchewan's uranium mining industry, the government and other supporters are therefore directly complicit in what is being called a low level nuclear war. Saskatchewan's exports breach the intent, if not the text of international law and future generations of victims will surely find us guilty as charged.

### Nuclear Energy is Non-Renewable

Uranium is a NON-renewable resource, and will run out fairly quickly. So we may as well make the full transition to sustainable energy right now, without creating toxic wastes for our children's children to have to suffer. To reduce GHGs to avert cataclysmic climate change we need to quickly shift to no-or- low-carbon energy sources, which means all the renewables: wind, solar, tidal, etc. Even without a level playing field in the energy market, wind and co-generation are already least-cost options to coal. If we stop nuclear from robbing scarce capital from making the conversion to renewables, the other renewable sources will quickly become both practical and economic. That's the right thing to do!

### Nuclear Energy is Non-Economical

The nuclear industry is not cheap. Several studies (e.g. New Scientist) have found that the true costs of nuclear are underestimated by a factor of 3. If the huge subsidies going to nuclear (75 billion dollars so far in Canada) were removed, the cost of electricity from nuclear plants would rise 300%.

### The Nuclear Job Myth

Being extremely capital-intensive, nuclear, including its front-end uranium mining, produces very little employment per amount invested. (Each job in uranium mining involves \$750,000 or more of capital.) Uranium mining has delivered a pittance of the royalties originally promised to the province and one-half of the jobs promised to northern Indigenous people. And it is making the North an unsustainable region (a Nuclear Sacrificial Area). Meanwhile, study after study has confirmed that a renewable energy sector produces many more jobs: wind, like solar, produces 5 times the employment per amount invested.