



Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly / ᓄᓇᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ ᑕᑦᑕᑦᑦᑦᑦ

Motion

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OPPOSITION TO EXPLORATION AND MINING OF URANIUM IN THE N.W.T.

WHEREAS Urangesellschaft Canada Ltd. has proposed the development of an open-pit uranium mine, mill, and attendant infrastructure west of Baker Lake, to be called 'Kiggavik';

WHEREAS the great majority of Inuit and other residents of the Keewatin region strongly oppose uranium mining in the Arctic and have adopted informed, considered and determined positions against the Kiggavik proposal, both as individuals and through their representative organizations;

WHEREAS this opposition has been demonstrated by approximately 1,700 signatures on petitions circulated in 5 Keewatin communities, including approximately 600 signatures on the petition circulated in Baker Lake;

WHEREAS the Kiggavik proposal is opposed by the Keewatin Inuit Association; the Keewatin Regional Council; the Keewatin Wildlife Federation; the Beverly-Qaminirjuaq Caribou Management Board; the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada; the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut; the Concerned Citizens' Committees which have been formed in Baker Lake and Rankin Inlet; the Northwest Territories Federation of Labour; Ecology North; and Nuclear Free North;

WHEREAS the 5th General Assembly of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, held in Sisimiut, Greenland in July 1989, passed a motion stating that the ICC will "support Inuit of the Keewatin region in opposing the proposed Kiggavik uranium mine";

Date of Notice / ᓄᓇᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ ᓄᓇᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ	February 27, 1990	Moved by / ᓄᓇᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ	Mr. P. Emerk
Date of Introduction / ᓄᓇᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ ᓄᓇᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ	March 1, 1990	Seconded by / ᓄᓇᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ	Mr. D. Morin
Disposition / ᓄᓇᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ			
Carried / ᓄᓇᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ		Ruled out of Order / ᓄᓇᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ	

WHEREAS the Inuit Circumpolar Conference also adopted an amendment to its draft Arctic Policy which states:

Mining, milling, reprocessing or enrichment of uranium and its decay products should be prohibited throughout the Arctic on environmental, health, ethical and political grounds, whether the uranium is being mined for its own sake or is extracted in the course of mining some other substance. Almost all uranium is used for nuclear weapons or nuclear reactors; the tiny amount used for medical, research and other purposes can be obtained from existing stockpiles or produced by other means. The greatest danger to human health and the environment from the entire nuclear cycle lies in the radioactive materials left in the tailings from uranium mining;

WHEREAS the Kiggavik proposal is strongly opposed by the Chipewyan and Cree of northern Saskatchewan, who have lived in the vicinity of uranium mines for more than a decade and have witnessed the effects of uranium mining on their communities and their wildlife;

WHEREAS a Dene Nation Leadership Meeting, held in Fort Franklin in June 1984, passed a motion which stated that "the Dene oppose any uranium development in Denendeh or anywhere else in Canada";

WHEREAS on May 21, 1982 the 8th Session of the 9th Assembly passed Motion 14-82 (2), moved by William Noah, then the MLA for Keewatin North, which stated that:

WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories has expressed concern over the impact of uranium exploration in the Northwest Territories on the people in the NWT;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly invited expert witnesses on the subject of uranium exploration and its effects at the winter and spring session of 1981;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly did not fully debate the question of uranium exploration at the end of the testimony of expert witnesses, and did not adopt a position on the subject;

AND WHEREAS, in view of the continued interest in uranium exploration in the Northwest Territories, it is important for the Legislative Assembly to adopt a position on this matter and to convey that position to the Executive Committee and the Government of Canada so that appropriate controls and conditions can be imposed if mining, exploration and production of uranium is to be allowed to proceed in the Northwest Territories;

NOW, THEREFORE, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Frobisher Bay, that this Assembly resolve into Committee of the Whole at the fall session of this House to finally determine its position on the mining and production of uranium in the Northwest Territories;

WHEREAS our current Government Leader supported this motion by stating that:

... we should have no excuse by the fall for not being fully prepared to take a position on this subject. The information is in. I think we have received very complete and exhaustive testimony on all the various viewpoints and interests that bear on this vital subject. I look forward to informed and useful debate, and I believe that the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada can very much profit from any advice we might give, because we are now in a position to make an informed and responsive decision on this issue.

WHEREAS Motion 14-82(2) was never acted upon by the Ninth Legislative Assembly, and as a result the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories is still without a position on the exploration for mining of uranium, even though the information presented to the Ninth Legislative Assembly has been verified and reinforced by subsequent research and experience;

WHEREAS on June 19, 1986, during the 7th Session of the 10th Legislative Assembly, our current Government Leader stated that:

the critical ingredient (in nuclear weapons) is uranium and I would like to say here that I am opposed to the exploration and mining of uranium in the Northwest Territories... there is no satisfactory way of dealing with the tailings and the waste that result from the mining of uranium. There is no proven, long-term method of dealing with uranium tailings... (the laws and regulations which supposedly prevent Canadian uranium from being used in nuclear weapons) have been proven to be entirely ineffective and meaningless... The truth is that Canadian uranium goes into nuclear weapons...;

WHEREAS economic activity which makes a contribution to the production of nuclear weapons and also generates dangerous waste which threatens the health of people and wildlife for thousands of years CANNOT be considered a form of sustainable development which is acceptable to Inuit and Dene values;

WHEREAS the government has stated in Economy in Transition: An Agenda for Action [Tabled Document No. 15-90(1)] that its economic strategy should be built upon the principle that: "development must be fostered in ways which are acceptable to community values";

WHEREAS the Department of Economic Development and Tourism's document Renewable Resources: Building on a Strengths: A Community Based Approach [Tabled Document No. 16-90(1)] states that "the principle of sustainable development is based on an underlying assumption that residents will have a say in how development proceeds in their communities... The interests of primary producers will be protected"; and

WHEREAS the Keewatin Inuit Association's Resolution #3-90 urged the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories to support Keewatin Inuit by adopting a position of unequivocal opposition to the proposed Kiggavik uranium mine;

NOW, THEREFORE, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that this Assembly declares its unequivocal opposition to the proposed Kiggavik uranium mine;

AND FURTHER that this Assembly declares its unequivocal opposition to the exploration and mining of uranium anywhere in the Northwest Territories.