



# MiningWatch Canada

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## Mines Alerte

### ***Policy Statement on Uranium Mining***

Uranium mining is a highly contentious issue across Canada and globally. Uranium mining, from exploration through to mining, processing, and eventual decommissioning, is risky and dangerous to the environment, wildlife, local peoples and communities, and workers.

Uranium is used for three purposes: weaponry, medical and scientific technology, and energy. MiningWatch Canada believes that there is no public support in Canada for the use of uranium for weaponry, and that medical and scientific technology uses could be well served by existing stockpiles of uranium.

The use of uranium for energy purposes is complex and contentious:

- The efficiencies, sustainability, costs, and benefits of nuclear energy must be considered and weighed against the efficiencies, sustainability, costs, and benefits of other energy sources (for example: gas, oil, coal, wind, and thermal), and against greatly enhanced conservation.
- The opportunity costs of the use of non renewable fuels (for example: coal, oil, and gas) for energy must be considered and weighed.
- The very serious short and long term waste management issues and risks of nuclear energy must be considered and weighed. At this point, there is no proven or publicly accepted technology for managing the long term risks.
- The risks of nuclear energy (for example: terrorist attacks and serious failures of nuclear plants) must be considered and weighed, particularly as these risks have far wider public impacts beyond the impacts on local environments, wildlife, people, and communities.
- Arguments have been made that nuclear energy is environmentally “clean and green”. While this may be true at the point of burning processed uranium as a fuel, the nuclear industry, seen as a whole, is not clean, nor green. It does contribute to green house gas emissions.
- There is no public consensus across Canadian society about overall energy policy, nor about nuclear energy as a key or primary part of public energy policy.

MiningWatch Canada takes the position that ***there should be a total moratorium on uranium exploration and new uranium mines across Canada until such time as:***

- *There is a full, well informed, and serious public debate and national consensus regarding energy policy, and the role of nuclear energy as part of this overall energy policy;*
- *The destructive environmental legacy of past and existing uranium mining has been cleaned up and permanently neutralized, and the people who have suffered injury to their health from involvement in or exposure to uranium mining and processing have been adequately compensated individually and collectively; and*
- *There is a sound, long term, economically feasible, scientifically demonstrated, and publicly acceptable means of isolating radioactive wastes (from the mining, processing, and use of uranium) from the environment and from human communities.*

Uranium exploration and mining creates serious negative short and long term impacts on the environment and on individuals and local communities. *MiningWatch Canada takes the position, as it does with all exploration and mining, that these impacts must be minimized and mitigated against, no matter what the public benefits may be.*