

I am a member of English River First Nation and the Outreach Coordinator for a group known as Committee for Future Generations. The uranium mines are located on our traditional territory in northern Saskatchewan. Our people have begun to feel the very real impacts of this industry on our land, water, cultural ways, and on our health.

When the mines first opened in the early 70's, the old ones warned the companies to leave the "black blood stone" alone. They tried to tell them what the Denesuline people had always known, that this rock had power to make people sick. They didn't listen. They claimed that their scientific knowledge and technical prowess could allow them to mine and use it safely. They promised economic prosperity would come to northern people with job opportunities working in the uranium mines and they started recruiting our young people directly from our high schools.

Over the past two decades, we have really started to notice big changes. The area around Key Lake Mine and Mill has always been our traditional moose hunting, and berry picking territory. From August to October the people would go there to get all of the food they needed to last the winter. Now there are hardly any moose there. The lakes have very few fish. There are fewer animals of any kind. (See interview with Dene Elder <http://www.mediacoop.ca/story/uranium-debate-heats-saskatchewan/13907>)

This means we are more dependent on imported, expensive store bought foods. When a moose is found it is no longer shared widely as was the custom. The Elders report that some of the lakes and river systems are now empty of life. The uranium companies, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, and the Government of Saskatchewan assure us that they are causing "no significant" impact on the environment. Our people survived on this land for tens of thousands of years by observing and reading the signs. The signs do not support what industry and regulators are saying.

Tests done on moose meat from around uranium mines have proven that there are radionuclides and heavy metals in the meat of moose and caribou. We have been told this is below the acceptable safety limits yet there is debate within the scientific and medical communities as to whether or not there is any safe level of radiation. (See **Thomas, P.**, J. Irvine, J. Lyster, and R. Beaulieu. 2005. Radionuclides and trace metals in Canadian moose near uranium mines: comparison of radiation doses and food chain transfer with cattle and caribou. Health Physics 88: 423-438. <http://www.usask.ca/toxicology/people/faculty/patricia-thomas.php> and www.nirs.org/press/06-30-2005/ and The Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation VII)

Over the past 15 years we have seen the cancer rates soar in the north. These are blamed on socio-economic conditions and compared to cancer rates in the southern parts of the province. We know that despite physician's efforts to call for a baseline health study for the last 20 years that no study was ever done. Most of the people who started working in the mines in the 1970's have suffered from cancer and/or have died from this. The CNSC stated that this is normal and that aboriginal people die at a younger age, yet the generation before this lived to their 80's and 90's and some beyond 100.

The mining companies have made a partnership with the Province of Saskatchewan Ministry of Health called the Community Vitality Monitoring Partnership. They channel funding to health

programs through their Corporate Social Responsibility funds. It is beneficial for the Health Regions to accept these funds and turn a blind eye to the cause of the illnesses as long as the cost of treatment is supplemented. We cannot wait for a study. Too many of our people are dying and as more young men and women are forced to take work in the uranium mines these unnecessary deaths will continue to plague us.

We are currently undertaking to get professional assistance to do a study ourselves. Thus far our research has uncovered that cancer statistics in the north are not kept in the same way as they are in the south. The way that the data is collected means that cancer rates and types will not show where clusters exist. This is how the Province is able to claim that our cancer rates are comparable to those in the south. If uranium mining is ever allowed in Quebec a baseline health study must be conducted but there is an ethical dilemma. If, in 15 or 20 years, those disease rates begin to soar, it will be too late, as the people will already have been impacted. That would be a crime I do not want to see repeated.

We have been researching the uranium and nuclear industries for a long time. We have nothing personally to gain from preventing the expansion of uranium mining. We have only duty to protect our children and grandchildren so they may continue to thrive in a safe and healthy way on the land and waters that have always provided for the indigenous people. There are other ways to get electricity that do not leave a deadly legacy in its wake.

I commend the Cree people for all they have done to take responsibility for the land, water, and ALL people of this world. I am also grateful to all of those who are making the effort to give this serious review.

We have attached a video and transcript for your panel and the public to view along with the transcript of that interview.

Masi-cho, (thank you), for the sake of the next 7000 generations,

Candyce Paul

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Uranium Mining Impacts in Canada Video Transcription

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QaDZfMOFZM&feature=youtu.be>

Speaking: Marius and Candyce Paul

MP: My name is Marius Paul. **Susnaghe** is our traditional name, poplar aspen tree home territory presently on treaty 10 territory it is in Northern Saskatchewan

CP: I am Candyce Paul, I also live in treaty 10 territory and we are part of Committee for Future Generations and we have taken on the nuclear uranium industry at both ends because they mine uranium in our area and they want to bury nuclear waste in our area

MP: When they, the mining industry moved in a lot of the people were once self-sufficient. They were sovereign. They knew how to live off the land. Once they were removed, they created an alien system that they are getting used to, and it takes time. So a lot of the people who have been dealing with the changes to the land including the destruction of the lands. Just as a reminder of what recently took place in British Columbia of the massive spill there, our lands also went through some very devastating spills of radioactive water, that took place in 1984, up in the Key Lake Uranium mine. So all of that devastation of the land, the lands and waters destruction has led to a reaction by our people who are also very, very slow to adopt to these toxic materials in their lives. So they are basically left unemployed, dependent and very, very confused at this point.

CP: We hear a lot from the workers. Workers tell us of some of the practices that happen. They have been told to bury radioactive garbage in the muskeg. The muskeg is a big swamp so it is getting into the waters and they know this, and a lot of them feel like this is the only job in the area. They (government and uranium industry) promised economic prosperity. We didn't get economic prosperity, we got a class system. The people that work have some money, and they can buy big trucks but the rest of the people are unemployed, so it has changed the culture. There is not the sharing you used to see that used to happen. The people that have money don't share. You know it has all become individualized. We are seeing what is happening with the workers. It is fly-in jobs so their families are disrupted. Their family life is disrupted, their relationships are disrupted. It affects how their children learn because dad is gone or mom is gone for a week at a time and everything is changed when they come back and everybody has to readjust. The guys that work there, a lot of them feel that the work that they are doing is hurting the earth, and it is hurting their spirit. It is tearing their spirit right apart. A lot of them don't stay long in those jobs. They will work for a few months and then either they get laid off or they just cannot handle it anymore. It's ah (troubled sigh) they have seen the lands change too much, and they are starting to see that the animals are starting disappearing. The fish are disappearing. The fish are sick. We know that there are studies done on the meat on the fish and it shows that there are heavy metals and radionuclides in it but this was never made public. It was available on the internet but people did not know it was there. They didn't even know there was a study, so all of this meat and stuff is affected and that is what we eat. We don't get foods from the stores as

much because it is way too expensive, and this is affecting our families. People are starting to come down with cancers and other diseases and in our community of 700 people 100 people are suffering from cancer now. And the nuclear industry and the health industry are tied together. They are partners. So we wanted a health study and there has never been a base line health study, before they started and they knew before they started, because of what happened in Japan and so forth that is it going to affect us. But they didn't want a health study because it would show the difference.

Interviewer: Hiroshima???

CP: Yeah, because of Hiroshima. We recently asked the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, we demanded a health study be done. They turned to their medical health officer, the provincial medical officer in Saskatchewan and he said, "No we don't need that. That would be a waste of money." They asked him what kind of study they want, "A mental health and wellness study because we have high suicide rates and people are depressed." Well when 1 in 7 of your people are dying it is almost one a month in our community that somebody is being buried from cancer and you know there is a whole community in grief all the time. It never ends. We don't have time to heal. So we are not really mentally deficient. They blame our cancer rates on socio-economic conditions which is nonsense because we are living in better conditions than we were 30-40 years ago, and yet our people are dying at younger ages. It is getting to the point where in another generation people are not going to live as long to become actually true elders. What is that going to do to our culture?

Interviewer: You cannot blame it on the change of diet because you still have the traditional diet of hunting and gathering.

CP: Exactly but what they said with this test that they did was, well the levels are below the safety limits so you should be alright if you don't eat it all the time and if you don't eat the organ meat. Well guess what. We eat it all the time. We eat the organ meat and the question is, is the safety level set to a suitable limit? It is way too high.

Interviewer: What about that safety level?

CP: The safety levels are set to the level that the mining equipment can handle so whatever their mining equipment can deal with that is what their safety level sets to. They have recently installed things to take care of selenium, molybdenum, and they say it is the best in the world but there is still uranium and all of that, and there is whole watersheds that are dead. There is no fish and now with the new environmental laws in Canada there is no reason that they have to.

Interviewer: So there is no protection on the rivers, no protection on the watershed anymore?

CP: And they can turn those whole lakes into tailings ponds, and the whole watershed into a tailings pond. We know the tailing ponds are leaking. The workers tell us these things. The way that they are built is not suitable. They were taken to task at the Canadian Nuclear Safety Committee hearings on the tailing ponds, and they just slough it off. And anything that was done in the past they say, "is a mistake of the past". That is a direct quote from Michael Binder President of the CNSC.

Interviewer: So what about the present?

CP: The present well, they will say that in a few generations, "Oh well we didn't know." when it is proven and it is up to us to prove it because they keep saying it is safe.

Interviewer: So what is the solution? What should we do in Quebec about Uranium mining?

CP: Don't allow it. If push comes to shove make sure your people get a baseline healthy study first but why should you? Because they are going to make you sick. And it is still cultural genocide. They really don't care. They knew actually. They got studies to show to people, to show what happens to people when they are exposed to even low doses of radiation. They have those studies. They just don't want to follow that because it is inconvenient for their industry.

Interviewer: Because the industry is telling us, that they have safety guard. They have way of mining and taking care of the tailing ponds that will be safe, is it true?

CP: They are experimenting, especially with the tailings, in order to keep those tailings safe all they are doing is coming up with an experiment that they are going to try. And what they have been doing with the Cluff Lake is leaking so if it was really safe it wouldn't be leaking. They cannot guarantee that safety.

Interviewer: What about the workers and their families? What is the impact of them? You say that they have all the equipment to make the workers safe, and healthy?

CP: The workers are told certain things, they got this dosimeter and it is going to read if they get over exposed but what it doesn't read is what is going on inside their bodies. So when they breath in the dust and those particles get into their bodies or if they swallow particles and that pretty much has to happen. You are exposed to it all the time down there, even the guys that change the truck tires are banging the dust off the tires, they are breathing it in.

Interviewer: Aren't they suppose to wear masks, and respiratory systems?

CP: Only in certain areas.

MP: And I don't think the mask, and other radiation protective clothing matters because you are dealing with atomic particles. A lot of these people who have been impacted are the workers, they bring all that stuff home.

CP: It is in their hair, behind their ears, in the crevasses of their skin, it is in their pores.

MP: And they breathe it in and out, so their families are also affected really deadly, really morbidly.

Interviewer: So what is the ratio of survival from the workers, like how long did they live?

MP: Well one of the workers that I know who died of cancer about six years ago, he worked for the mining company for approximately 20 years, and he died at age 54, 54 is when he passed, and he was a rugged athletic type of person, he was strong.

Interviewer: Can you tell us his name?

MP: [Hesitant, contemplating, heavy hearted expression] Abraham was his name he used to play hockey for Junior A caliber so he was a very, very active and very healthy individual. He died of lung cancer and he died of horribly.

CP: Actually did he not leave a message with you for you to tell people?

MP: Yeah, he asked tell our people not to work for the uranium mining companies.

CP: There is a lot of cases too we have heard of over exposure that were never reported. We know that people, they have these safety competitions, and they put people in teams for these safety competitions and there are lucrative prizes if you win the safety competition. So if you do have an accident at the work place, and you do become exposed they don't tell, and if you do tell you are going to be sent home and you don't get to work. So a lot of that kind of thing goes on. The youngest I have heard about getting sick is 24 years old, and he worked in the mines from right after school. They are also recruiting our kids in the high school before they even have a chance to think about other careers. And the government, the government is pushing us towards just being miners. That is all they want us to be. And as far as improving our lives and our communities it isn't doing that. We don't have an economy. We have two stores in most of these communities in our north. Nobody is becoming business people. Nobody is serving what our local community needs. So right now when those mines close nothing is going to be there.

Interviewer: Do you have a final message for the commissioner on mining in Quebec?

MP: When the mining company, Cameco, signed a 600 million dollar deal with for a decade worth of prosperity, the prices, the uranium prices dropped. I think the mining company was also aware of that because they have business projections that will help them decide when they will be facing good prices bad prices etc. They knew that is why they went after our people to get them to sign right away, so when they signed, it was like saying, so you signed away your land, sorry you gotta go now.

CP: I would advise the people of Quebec to stand strong, to stick to the moratorium permanent ban on uranium mining because where ever the uranium and nuclear industry is, people get sick. And the uranium and nuclear industry are responsible for deaths all over the world. They are making us be the collateral damage for their profits and that is unacceptable, so don't do it.

MP: Don't get trolled by nuclear medicine. It is an oxymoron word, spin words in the nuclear industry.

CP: They do say they are safe, there is no sufficient risk, but what that means is, there is no sufficient risk to their profits. That means there is still risk and until they can prove there is absolutely no risk, DON'T GO FOR IT.

Interviewer: Thank you very much Candyce, thank you very much Susnaghe.

Thomas, P., J. Irvine, J. Lyster, and R. Beaulieu. 2005. Radionuclides and trace metals in Canadian moose near uranium mines: comparison of radiation doses and food chain transfer with cattle and caribou. Health Physics 88: 423-438.

<http://www.usask.ca/toxicology/people/faculty/patricia-thomas.php>

Community Vitality Monitoring Partnership

<http://www.cvmpp.ca/>

Candyce Paul at the Uranium Hearings with CNSC LaRonge. Oct., 2013

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYhYfYMZtjo>

Kirstin Scansen at the Uranium Hearings with CNSC LaRonge. Oct., 2013

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3KLp8sHXu0>

Committee for Future Generations at CNSC Hearings LaRonge, 2013

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ksmZUn1q9w>