

RESOLUTION

On nuclear issues, both civilian and military, in Quebec –
from uranium mining to the perpetual management of radioactive wastes.

WHEREAS there has never been a uranium mine in the province of Quebec;

WHEREAS there are various uranium exploration projects presently underway in several regions of Quebec that could lead to uranium mining in the near future;

WHEREAS sand-like uranium mine residues are voluminous and contain eighty-five percent of the radioactivity contained in the original uranium ore body;

WHEREAS uranium mine residues contain dozens of radioactive materials -- natural byproducts of uranium -- that are among the most radiotoxic substances known to science, such as radium, thorium, radon and polonium;

WHEREAS uranium mine residues remain dangerously radioactive for hundreds of thousands of years;

WHEREAS the US National Academy of Sciences concluded in 2011 that there is still no proven technology to ensure the safe long term storage of radioactive uranium mine residues;

WHEREAS the only civilian technology that requires the use of large quantities of uranium is nuclear power;

WHEREAS the permanent shutdown of the Gentilly-2 reactor at Bécancour marks the end of nuclear power in Québec, so Quebec society has no need for large quantities of uranium;

WHEREAS the government of Canada is committed to end the use of uranium-fuelled reactors to produce medical isotopes in 2016, and is currently financing the development of alternative methods for the production of these isotopes;

WHEREAS the only non-civilian technology that requires large quantities of uranium is nuclear armaments, and Quebec society has no incentive to contribute directly or indirectly to the construction of more nuclear weapons;

WHEREAS uranium is a non-renewable resource that is transformed -- inside reactors such as Gentilly-2 -- into highly radioactive nuclear wastes that have to be isolated from the environment and from humans for hundreds of thousands of years at a cost of tens of billions of dollars;

WHEREAS the National Assembly unanimously adopted a motion on October 30, 2008, prohibiting the permanent storage, on Quebec territory, of nuclear wastes originating from outside Quebec;

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WHEREAS the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) has declared that since New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and Saskatchewan are provinces that benefit from nuclear power, these four provinces are candidates for locating a site for the permanent storage of irradiated nuclear fuel waste from all of Canada's nuclear reactors, and NWMO has invited Quebec municipalities interested in receiving the above-mentioned nuclear wastes in their territory to file an application with them;

WHEREAS Canada, one of the largest exporters of uranium in the world, has participated in international discussions with its Australian, Russian, French and American partners, under the aegis of the International Framework for Nuclear Energy Cooperation -- formerly known as the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) -- where the possibility has been entertained that those countries exporting uranium might be required to make a commitment to take back the radioactive wastes of their clients;

WHEREAS the mining, refining and enrichment of uranium pose a serious menace to ecosystems, groundwater and public health, and also contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons;

WHEREAS plutonium, one of the many byproducts of uranium that is created inside all nuclear reactors, facilitates the construction of nuclear weapons, contributes to the proliferation of such weapons in the world and thereby constitutes a permanent threat to millions of human beings;

WHEREAS uranium exploration and mining has been banned in British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Virginia (USA);

WHEREAS the Grand Council of the Cree has proclaimed a moratorium on uranium mining in Eeyou-Istchee (Northern Quebec) as have hundreds of municipalities in Quebec;

WHEREAS the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), a Nobel-prize-winning organization, is calling for a halt to uranium mining world-wide;

WHEREAS the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) and Physicians for Global Survival (PGS), representing several thousand doctors in Canada, have taken a stand against uranium mining;

WHEREAS Quebec is endowed with enormous renewable energy resources that could be tapped widely, and municipalities lack the financial resources that would allow them to develop such energy alternatives on their territory;

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Consequently it is moved by, seconded by,

- that adopt the present resolution;
- that ask the government of Quebec to promptly declare a moratorium prohibiting uranium exploration and mining throughout the territory of Quebec, as has been done by British Columbia, by Nova Scotia, by Virginia and by the Grand Council of the Cree through a prohibition against uranium mining in Eeyou-Istchee (Northern Quebec), and to make this moratorium permanent by passing a law to that effect, as Nova Scotia has recently done;
- that ask the government of Quebec to ensure the decision to proceed to the decommissioning and dismantling of the Gentilly-2 nuclear reactor is irreversible;
- that ask the government of Quebec to support continued employment at Gentilly-2 through the acquisition of expertise in the dismantling of nuclear reactors, ongoing activities to ensure that the site is safe and secure according to the highest international standards and the continual monitoring of radioactivity;
- that ask the government of Quebec to require Hydro-Quebec to invest an amount comparable to the initial cost estimate for the refurbishment of the Gentilly-2 reactor in order to finance a vast program of energy conservation, energy efficiency and production of energy from renewable, soft, non-hydraulic sources, such as wind, solar and geothermal, thereby creating thousands of jobs in all regions of Quebec;
- that ask the government to submit a legislative bill to the National Assembly based on the motion unanimously adopted by the National Assembly on October 30, 2008, stating [unofficial translation] *“That the National Assembly ask the government to prohibit the burial on Quebec territory of radioactive wastes and irradiated nuclear fuel from outside Quebec”* (« Que l’Assemblée nationale demande au gouvernement d’interdire l’enfouissement sur le territoire du Québec des déchets et des combustibles irradiés en provenance de l’extérieur du Québec »);
- that ask the government of Quebec to develop a detailed policy for the long-term management of nuclear wastes produced within Quebec’s territory as recommended by the Bureau d’audiences publiques sur l’environnement (BAPE) in 2005;
- that ask the government of Quebec to prohibit the creation of any new inventories of radioactive wastes within Quebec such as those resulting from nuclear power plants or uranium mines, excluding the small quantities of radioactive waste resulting from the use of isotopes for medical or industrial purposes or from the operation of cyclotrons or other accelerators.