

From: Anne Bishop [REDACTED]
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To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Bills 1, 6 and 12

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Submission to the Public Bills Committee
Anne Bishop
West Hants

Re: Bills No. 1, 6 and 12

My original intension in making this submission was to express strong opposition to the changes Bill No. 6 will make to the current limitations on uranium mining and fracking in Nova Scotia. I have been involved with the citizen research and discussion that led to these pieces of legislation since 1980. They were well considered regulations, with solid science behind them. The government is claiming that there are safer technologies for extraction of these resources now but a scan by qualified researchers prompted by this claim show that this claim is not true. Both forms of mining still have serious health risks that will be with us for thousands of years. The restrictions on both forms of mining also had the support of a majority of Nova Scotians. For example, of the 244 briefs presented to the McCleave Inquiry, 211 were opposed to Uranium Mining. Of the 33 not specifically in opposition, 32 were from mining companies or regulatory agencies explaining their role. The Mining Association of Nova Scotia claims to have 2024 poll that shows 54% of Nova Scotians in favour and 22% opposed, but they have not made the actual questions public. This may well be a case of what is called "push polling," where desired answers are encouraged by the way questions are framed. Nova Scotians still care about their health and the health of their environment and have too much experience with companies coming in from outside, taking what they want and leaving us with a toxic mess.

Now, however, after having a look at the Bills you are currently considering, my concern has broadened to what I have come to see as an attack on basic democracy in Nova Scotia:

First, Bill No. 6, which repeals the bans on fracking on uranium mining, went to Second Reading at the very end of a Friday afternoon session, at the beginning of school break week, after the press, the public and many legislators had already left, having been told that no legislation would be discussed that afternoon. That is a devious, anti-democratic tactic.

Second, the Mi'kmaw Chiefs have made it very clear that they have not been consulted on these changes, something that is required not only by the principles of Reconciliation, but by Treaty and the Canadian Constitution.

Third, Bill No. 1 has a series of provisions that weaken democratic participation and give the government unprecedented powers. From limiting the ability of this very committee to make

amendments to legislation, to giving themselves the ability to keep the Auditor General's reports in-camera, to putting new limits on the press and public's ability to get information through Freedom of Information requests, to giving the government the ability to fire public servants without cause, this bill contains a frightening centralization of power and an attack on democracy.

Fourth, the freedom of universities to do research in the public interest, for the general advancement of various fields of scholarship and out of pure curiosity is an extremely important part of democracy. All sound public policy is based on good research. With Bill No 12, the government is completely over-reaching its powers and, again, threatening democracy, by giving itself more control over the governance and research priorities of public universities.

If this government had revealed its intent to make these changes before the election, the outcome would have been different. The tactics it is using to destroy the limits on its power are taken straight from the playbook of the Ford government in Ontario, the Trump administration in the United States and leaders who moved from elected to authoritarian positions all over the world. It is frightening. Please send these bills back for much more consideration and public participation.