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From: Jill Blakeney [REDACTED]
Sent: March 17, 2025 6:26 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: uphold the uranium exploration/mining ban

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Dear Committee Members:

The following is a letter I wrote yesterday to Health Minister Thompson (with CCs to Premier Houston and my MLA, Kim Masland), who I understand is not on your committee. As a retired physician, I am extremely concerned about the health implications of lifting Nova Scotia's ban. Here is the letter expressing my concerns. Thank you for considering this matter, and I hope the committee will do the right thing for the health of Nova Scotians and recommend that the ban stay in place.

Sincerely,

Jill Blakeney

Dear Minister Thompson:

I am writing to you as a retired family physician, raised in Wolfville, who moved back to beautiful Nova Scotia from Ontario 8 years ago. There is no way this province should even be considering lifting the ban on uranium exploration and mining.

As a nurse yourself, you must be aware of the serious risk to the health of Nova Scotians that re-opening this province to uranium exploration and mining would pose. If this ban is lifted, the escape of radon gas during exploration and the toxic tailings, leachates and radioactive byproducts produced during mining all have the potential to be very harmful to Nova Scotians, both today and for generations to come.

Saskatchewan is currently the world's second largest producer of uranium. The mines there have resulted in contaminated groundwater and downstream watersheds. These mines are often held up as examples of safety for humans; however, much of the mining there is done robotically without humans involved as the conditions are so toxic. More significantly, these mines are in the northern Saskatchewan wilderness and 100's of kilometres away from towns. By contrast, Nova Scotia is a very densely populated province. On the N.S. uranium site map, I see uranium deposits around the HRM and into the Annapolis Valley, obviously areas with dense populations and agricultural industries. Moreover, many people in rural and small-town Nova Scotia have wells, therefore requiring safe aquifers and safe ground water.

Finally, it is my understanding that the world currently has plenty of uranium, it is not in short supply, and that lucrative markets would not be guaranteed. Moreover, apparently Nova Scotia uranium is of much poorer quality than in

Saskatchewan and is likely more difficult/expensive to extract given this poorer quality as well as its proximity to human populations. So even if the Houston government does not care about the human health impact for Nova Scotians today and into the future, uranium is unlikely to be profitable for this province. It is all too easy to predict that once again our taxpayer dollars will be used to entice wealthy mining interests with subsidies and other incentives to extract what they need, only for them to then leave the province with their profits and for taxpayers, once again, to bear the huge financial and human cost of cleanup and decontamination. We have seen this so many times in other natural resources extraction industries in this province already.

This government needs to get beyond the short-term promises of quick-profit mindset of resource extraction industries to investments that build human capital and innovation and look forward to the future and not backwards to when Nova Scotia was just a supplier of raw materials. PLEASE LEAVE THE URANIUM IN THE GROUND and let's proudly count ourselves as one of many other jurisdictions (including British Columbia, Quebec, Virginia U.S.A., Greenland, New Zealand, and much of Australia) that have banned uranium exploration and mining.

Sincerely,

Jill Blakeney, MD, PhD

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