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## Ban uranium mining — Tory

**Hants West MLA introduces private member's bill**

By GORDON DELANEY Valley Bureau

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Chuck Porter: 'In Hants West, we want it totally banned, legislatively and legally.'

Tory MLA Chuck Porter wants a permanent ban on uranium mining in his riding.

The Hants West MLA introduced a private member's bill in the legislature Wednesday that, if supported, would guarantee test drilling doesn't take place.

It was a promise he made to his constituents during the last election campaign.

"It was a discussion that was had on the doorsteps during the campaign," Mr. Porter said Thursday in an interview.

"I spoke clearly about it . . . that I'm not in favour of it. And I assured people that I did not support uranium mining in Nova Scotia to any degree, and that I would be introducing legislation to ban it at least in Hants West."

An indefinite provincial moratorium was put in place in 1982.

Mining companies and advocates say the moratorium limits other mining activity.

The Uranium Mining Moratorium Act states that mining activities must halt and the company must contact the Natural Resources Department if uranium concentrations greater than 100 parts per million are discovered.

Opponents say the indefinite moratorium is not clear or strong enough.

One company, Capella Resources, announced last spring that it would begin conducting test drill holes at its Titus project at Falls Lake, about 20 kilometres south of Windsor.

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The drilling would allow the company to extract small amounts of ore to determine the level of uranium that could potentially be extracted to create green energy.

Local residents are worried about the act not being enforced.

The announcement has also rekindled a long-standing debate over the safety of mining uranium for its nuclear properties to create a "clean" energy.

Opponents say the low-grade ore could increase carbon emissions and, in some cases, cause toxic contamination.

Mr. Porter said constituents are concerned about the health of their families and protection of their watersheds, and that there is too much flexibility within the act to reassure citizens of company compliance.

"In Hants West, we want it totally banned, legislatively and legally," he said.

Mr. Porter said the former Tory government he belonged to came out in support of mining, but not specifically uranium mining.

The Tories held a series of public meetings across the province last year to develop a new mineral strategy.

David Morse, the natural resources minister at that time, said that the province would lift the moratorium if it could be proven uranium mining could be done safely and benefit the provincial economy. Mr. Morse was defeated in the June election.

The Mining Association of Nova Scotia, which represents 150 companies, has argued for the moratorium to be lifted to increase all mining activity.

The association argues that mineral companies are spending millions more dollars in New Brunswick and Newfoundland, where uranium mining is still allowed.

It said some companies will not mine in Nova Scotia because they have to halt their activities if they come across uranium in greater concentrations than 100 parts per million.

Back in 1985, the McCleave inquiry concluded that it could be done safely.

"It's not that I don't support other mining, like gypsum and things like that," Mr. Porter said. "But I'm in no way, shape or form interested in talking about uranium mining in Hants West."

He said it will be up to the government to determine when the private member's bill will be voted on.

"But I would like to see it come forward as soon as possible."

He said in a news release "the health and well-being of the people of Hants West must come first."

"For almost 30 years now, they have been fighting to make sure uranium mining stays out of their community. By enacting a moratorium, the province backed their stance, but we want to take it a step further and ask the NDP government to invoke a complete ban in Hants West."

In 2007, Halifax-Fairview MLA Graham Steele, now the minister of finance in the new NDP government, introduced a private member's bill asking for a ban on uranium mining in Nova Scotia.

( [gdelaney@herald.ca](mailto:gdelaney@herald.ca) )

 VOTE ADDED! 11 votes

COMMENTS  (27)

#### POST YOUR COMMENT

**Wayne from NS wrote:**

It might well be a good idea to ban uranium mining in NS. We gave away our Natural gas, and in a few years we might be very glad to still have uranium to provide heat etc for our homes. If we mine it now, we'll end up the same as with the gas, we'll have none when we need it first. And by then the NIMBY's will be getting cold and the batteries will be running out in their flashlights, so if there are any companies left that can mine and use it to our advantage, it will be full steam ahead.

**Mad Mac wrote:**

Just remember Mr. Tory MLA/AKA N.I.M.B.Y., the next time you need an x-ray or a new smoke detector that they require this mineral. Looks like you should go without both. Bet you won't Mr. Two Face.

**justamom wrote:**

Once again, people who don't know the science of mining are using scare tactics and untrue statements to justify their actions and bring in useless legislation to appease small vocal groups. When we are paying for high energy costs associated with electricity and gas usage, remember the decisions of today! There are so many false statements in this article...it is maddening!

**Feedback wrote:**

Appears we don't have enough confidence in ourselves to make future decisions. Why are we in a position now to make a decision for all eternity??

**shakyweebles wrote:**

What makes me wonder is if he was and is so concerned about this why did he wait until the NDP were elected to try and bring in this vote. Seems to me like grandstanding and a whole big bunch of NIMBY now that all his buddies have been kicked out. I agree with Wayne why not wait until we do need it and then go for it. After all NSP and Emmera are selling our electricity to the States cheaper than we can have it here and the same goes for the natural gas and any oil produced it goes stateside and cheaper. We keep getting screwed royally and never ever get told we are loved nor a kiss because these companies have their hands in our pockets. So yes stop the mining for now until the government can get in place guarantees that we NOVA SCOTIANS will be given the benefits first and cheaper than anyone else otherwise tell them all to go to hell.

**Frunk wrote:**

All one has to do in support of this bill is to look at Elliot Lake Ontario. It is a wasteland contaminated with uranium tailings. Mining of all minerals should carry of clear and precise guarantee that it can be absolutely untaken safely.

**Babblingbaby wrote:**

How about a Bill for a new leader socialist Porter?

**Brandy Spring wrote:**

Was that his position when he was in government?

**Heatherdee wrote:**

Hmmm. Now that was an interesting comment mad mac. It may be the case of a leopard changing his spots. I support this ban and bill 100% but this is just more posturing/publicity from someone who, had his party formed government, was bending toward supported its mining it and had also allowed the exploration of it which is damaging as well. I believe both the West Hants and Windsor councils have already passed a motion last year indicating they wanted this ban and it was a major goal of the local NDP candidate. No reason why it wouldn't go through ordinary channels. However, what's interesting to note here is that another local mining company's 3rd time up to bat is next week, when the deadline for their 5 focus reports to support their expansion into an ecologically sensitive/watershed area. In fact, it is probably the best candidate for land protection in the province today. How will this all play out? It's possible that's this is so Porter can be seen to vocally support this ban, but choose to support the other company and ignore the also valid concerns (supported by the last Environment Minister but ignored by Porter in the last election) of even more constituents.

**Heatherdee wrote:**

PS. It is also interesting to note that even the concerns of the uranium mining - ban crowd were ignored by Porter when he failed to show at a election- forum citing "constituents had hidden agendas" held in West Hants to deal with how his government's signature environmental legislation was going to play out in this constituency. I point it out because it demonstrates one of the traditional laws of politics to a tee: "Those who have the power, lack the will and those who lack the power, have the will." Hoping tho we'll see lots of will by this NDP government. Still early days yet, tho, I know.

**daniel wrote:**

I am sorry to see MR Porter is out of touch with reality. I really hope he can go and get educated on causes before he goes public, but then again he has never done that and has the track record to prove it.

**Julius wrote:**

"But I'm in no way, shape or form interested in talking about uranium mining in Hants"...what a great stance on an important issue. Where was Chuck Porter and the rest of the small but organized fear mongers when ESNS and the Mining Association held a two day conference THIS WEEK on nuclear energy and uranium Mining? This Monday, there was a FREE presentation by Patrick Moore (Founder of Green Peace) on Nuclear. There was ONLY 1 person there who had the guts to argue against nuclear...where was everyone else!!!! It seems to me, that when you have the scientific community, the experts in Nuclear technology, these anti groups stay as far away as they can get. They realize that they will be taken to task on the rhetoric and false truths they so eagerly spread. Regardless of your stance, people had the chance to get their opinions heard and addressed by the best in the nuclear industry. I think it is diploarable that the loudest anit's didn't make an appearance at this event. Energy will continue to be one of the biggest challenges we face as a species, and to blindly argue against the only clean base energy source in favor of burning dirty coal is a qaigmire to me

**David fm CH wrote:**

Bad policy, bad idea. I don't care which party you represent, wrong is wrong. Utilization of our Natural Resources is key to fixing the economy of NS. Uranium is mined here is Sask very successfully, employing thousands with good paying jobs and adding \$\$\$ to the economy. I respect the fact that Porter is fulfilling a committment to his constituents but it is a promise that should never have been made.

**annmarie wrote:**

If there is a trust issue, the first questions should be: "Why do you want the uranium and what do you propose to do with the uranium and will the waste be cleaned up in 100 years from now and what will it be used for"????? The answers would be no, no and no. Is the uranium already spoken for by someone???? Keep the moritorium in place.

**gramps wrote:**

From reviewing the comments made by othet posters, it seems to me that Mr Porter belongs to the wrong party. If he was an NDP MLA, he would be a Cabinet Minister.

**radioman wrote:**

Hey madmac better brush up on your science. Smoke detectors use Americium 241 and modern X-ray machines do not use any radioactive material at all and instead use very high voltages to accelerate electrons. Taken from Wikipedia:"X-rays are generated by an X-ray tube, a vacuum tube that uses a high voltage to accelerate electrons released by a hot cathode to a high velocity. The high velocity electrons collide with a metal target, the anode, creating the X-rays. In medical X-ray tubes the target is usually tungsten or a more crack-resistant alloy of rhenium (5%) and tungsten (95%), but sometimes molybdenum for more specialized applications, such as when soft X-rays are needed as in mammography." Non of the elements used require Uranium. Americium is obtained by bombarding Plutonium with electrons. (BTW I majored in chemistry and physics) :) I do agree with you about ol' Chucky boy however. There are ways to safely mine uranium and that is what should be looked at. It's about time government started to reap the benefits of our natural resources and stop "protecting" us from them. It is people like Chuck that are holding this province back from prospering. It's not just about Uranium.

**mact wrote:**

I'm curious as to why Mr. Porter waited until his party was defeated to raise this issue. He had more than ample opportunity to do it prior to the NDP taking over power. Pandering or posturing maybe or a little bit of both?

**Check the Facts wrote:**

This is laughable and sad. Who is this guy? Mr. MLA please ensure that every residence in your constituency has their home checked for deadly radon gas then. It is a result (daughter product) of uranium occurrences and undoubtedly contributes to the high levels of cancer in the province. I for one would like to know where the high uranium is for no other reason than urban planning. A moratorium on exploration effectively blinds the government as to where the uranium lies. An American senator many years ago once infamously said, in respect to radon, "It is only a problem if we choose to recognize it" that has to go up with Mr. Porter saying "... (he is) in no way, shape or form interested in talking about uranium mining in Hants West". This guy may be vilified in history for his stance of complete ignorance. Where would the harm be in discussing the geology of his constituency? Instead he wants to ban identifying where uranium lies so that we never know that our homes, schools, hospitals, are sitting on the stuff... How can it be that our government prohibits the identification of something naturally occurring? Especially something that has documented health effects. This dumbfounds me.

**Frank wrote:**

This sort of fuzzy-headed thinking is why the Tories are out of office. Nuclear power is safe (yes, including the mining and waste disposal). France, South Korea, and Japan are all getting between 80% and 90% of their electricity from nukes and no problems. In fact with the cleaner air it actually saves lives. We could run electric cars on nukes but the NIMBY syndrome, and the greens who want us all back in the stone age won't allow it. Heaven forbid we should do anything that might create a job or two. Our tax base could use a little help too. If you are a young person just starting out, the best thing you can do is to get out of this backwards debt-ridden province. Go to Alberta, Sask. or just head straight for Texas or Florida.

**DougRoy wrote:**

Legislation should be based on logic and societal concerns. Ignoring one or the other is wrong. I was fortunate enough to attend the ESANS / Mining Association's conference on nuclear energy this week. I was interested in the possibilities of nuclear power for reducing our reliance on carbon fuels, but skeptical because nuclear waste can be dangerously radioactive for ten thousand, one hundred thousand or a million years, depending on your level of tolerance for radiation. What I discovered was that uranium mining is much, much cleaner than it was fifty or even fifteen years ago. Society's, hence government's expectations are extremely high regarding mining's effect on the environment. In other words, Canadian regulations accept ZERO effect. A mine is expected to release no more than a naturally occurring uranium deposit. Indeed, the post-reactor waste is a subject of concern. We haven't yet figured that out. What we're doing is placing the waste in long-term storage until we CAN figure it out (over the next hundred or thousand years). Look at the technological progress that we've made in in the last hundred years. I'm sure we can solve the waste problem over the next 100.

**mact wrote:**

Check the Facts: You are right. You can unearth radon gas by digging a basement, a well for drinking water or for that matter by digging a grave. You can also unearth it by other forms of mining also like the ones that mister Porter tolerates.

**keeptheyounginNS wrote:**

I would like to add a few thoughts: -85% of the power in Nova Scotia comes from (mainly colombian) coal burnt mainly in Cape Breton -The big stacks in Bedford Basin, Dartmouth side, produce additional power in the winter by burning really dirty diesel, not fit for regular vehicles or furnaces - Radioactive isotopes are essential for cancer radiotherapy and many essential medical diagnostics; these can only be produced in a nuclear reactor running on uranium -Uranium is naturally present in much of Nova Scotia, particularly granite areas: it is already seeping out of the ground, by natural processes; unfortunately, we do not know where most of the uranium is because: a) either the province will have to pay a LOT of dollars to find out or b) someone will have to be allowed to look for uranium and help find where it is -Uranium is being mined in China, Russia, etc... I sleep better when it is mined in Canada -Fly ash from coal is radioactive, it is being mined in China to recover Uranium -I am not sure how much windmills and solar panels can help during windless nights Let's ban uranium mining in NS! Sod the colombians mining the coal, and sod Cape Breton!

**keeptheyounginNS wrote:**

Re: Elliot Lake Contrary to an earlier poster, Elliot Lake is not a wasteland, it is a retirement community (like most of Kings and Hants will soon be). It is a nice place and I would live there with my kids if it was not for the sheer amount of snow they get and the 2-3 hour drive to anywhere else. I have been to Elliot Lake within the past few years (actually, 2006), have you? How many jobs are we losing in Nova Scotia by not allowing anything? The young are bleeding out of the province, not due to lack of education, but due to lack of jobs. Saskatchewan has approximately one million people, like Nova Scotia, yet the earnings per capita in Saskatchewan are 50% higher than in Nova Scotia and unemployment there is the lowest in Canada. Obviously, Saskatchewan is actively doing things to create jobs and retain people. Exactly what are we doing in Nova Scotia other than stopping this and that for that and this reason? Are we trying to turn Nova Scotia into a retirement community? No wonder young people leave.

**libbysue wrote:**

Education is the key, take the time to look at the research and history and then formed an opinion. As long as it is educated and not spouting off false facts I am okay with people taking whatever side they choose on this issue. Just don't expect to use what you refuse to see mined.

**Julius wrote:**

radioman, Happy to hear all comments. Not a science guy, but where does the Plutonium come from as you mentioned in the making of Americium..... as a by product of uranium in Nuclear Reactors. While you may be correct in specific kinds of Xray's, i believe it is still widely used. Maybe im wrong. Just a thought

**Mad Mac wrote:**

Thanks radioman for the info. I am not up to snuff on science I was just going by hear say as far as radiation and such. I also like to jump at NIMBY as you can tell.

**fletcherbingley wrote:**

It is unfortunate that people like Mr. Porter even have a vote, not with standing that he was a former MLA. Mr. Porter is obviously not only out of date but ill informed on this subject. Very interesting that just this past week there was a conference in Halifax dedicated to the knowledge of our nuclear world. Leading experts from across Canada spoke at the day and a half conference presenting sound facts that should be of importance of every resident in this province. This readership might be interested in knowing that Mr. Porter was not in attendance! Ignorance is no longer an excuse in this country, and because significant amounts of uranium mineralization are present in many areas of this province, it is the responsibility of all residents to become informed on such an important topic. If Mr. Porter would have attended some of the recent information sessions he would have learned about the importance of the nuclear industry in all parts of the world. I sincerely hope this Bill suffers the fate that it deserves!

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