

Proposal 11

Title: Concerning Uranium Exploration and Mining within the region of Maritime Conference of the United Church of Canada

Originating Body: Church in Action Committee (Mining The Connections Working Group)

Background

Whereas the world is a sacred space and a sacred trust, The United Church policy base¹ has provided a framework for considering the full range of environmental and social consequences from the exploration, development, and use of uranium; and

Whereas uranium exploration, uranium mining, and uranium ore milling involve permitted routine releases of radiation and chemically toxic, radioactive substances; and radon, toxic dust, and tailings can contaminate air, soil, watersheds, and wells; all with a risk of cancers, genetic damage, and other health damage to the workers, the public, and non-human life; and

Whereas The United Church has expressed concerns repeatedly over the last thirty years about the radioactive, chemically toxic wastes from uranium mining, and the reality that none of the available options for waste management can provide the containment for the long time period required by the inherent toxic hazards of the wastes; and

Whereas mining companies would leave with the profits while the present and future generations would be left with the radioactive chemically toxic wastes and their continuing health, environmental, and economic burden; and

Whereas The United Church views Canadian uranium mining as an issue within the complex of problems with nuclear power, including the international problem of extremely hazardous nuclear fuel wastes; the risks of proliferation of military nuclear capability; and the military applications of depleted uranium that expose the environment, civilian populations, and military personnel to a radioactive, chemically toxic by-product of civilian nuclear power; and

Whereas The United Church is concerned about sustainability and jobs and recommended to the federal government that funds invested in uranium nuclear energy *could provide more ecologically sustainable forms of energy and yield many more jobs if invested in programs for energy conservation, efficiency, and the development of alternative, renewable energy sources* (2000); and

Whereas since 1980, The United Church has repeatedly called for a moratorium on uranium mining;

Therefore it is proposed that the 84th Maritime Conference of the United Church of Canada (2009):

- **Make a public statement in support of a legislated ban on uranium exploration and mining in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Quebec;**
- **Write to the Premier of New Brunswick, the Premier of Nova Scotia, and the Premier of Quebec stating support for a legislated ban on uranium exploration and mining;**
- **Encourage members, congregations, and presbyteries to make statements of support for a legislated ban and to express their support of such a ban by writing to their premier and their member of provincial government on uranium exploration and mining in their province.**

Friendly amendment to the last bullet in the Therefore statement adding the words “and to express their support of such a ban by writing to their premier and their member of provincial government” after “support for a legislated ban”

AMENDMENT CARRIED

It is moved by Bob Johnson, seconded by Peter Smith that the 84th Annual Meeting of Maritime Conference approve Proposal #11 entitled “Concerning Uranium Exploration and Mining with the Region of Maritime Conference of the United Church of Canada.”

MOTION CARRIED

¹ *The Nuclear Option for Canadians*. 28th General Council, 1980.

One Earth Community – Ethical Principles for Environment and Development, 34th General Council, 1992.

Energy in the One Earth Community – Current Challenges and Future Options for Energy Use in the Canadian and Global Contexts, 37th General Council, 2000.

Nuclear and Uranium Mining Social Policy Position, 38th General Council, 2003