

Honorable Premier Brad Wall and Members of Cabinet  
Legislative Building, Room 226, Legislative Building Regina, Sk. S4S 0B3

Mr. Peter MacKinnon, President of the University of Saskatchewan and U of S Faculty Assoc.  
Mr. Art Dumont, Chairman, Board of Governors, and Board of Governors  
University of Saskatchewan, 212 College Building, 107 Administration Place, Saskatoon, SK. S7N 5A2

Dr. Éric Turcotte, Dr. Thom Mason, Mr. Richard Drouin and Mr. Peter Goodhand  
Expert Review Panel on Medical Isotope Production, Natural Resources Canada, Ottawa K1A 0E4

November 17, 2009.

Dear Honorable Citizens,

**Re: Nuclear Issues**

The 1993 synod of the Saskatoon Roman Catholic diocese established the office for social justice. . We address matters that affect the well being of individuals, families, and communities within our diocese, province, nationally, globally and we also support a sustainable ecological environment.

At a September 24 meeting, attended by 56 people representing justice and peace communities in Saskatoon Catholic parishes, my advisors and I were instructed to communicate concerns and to ask for clarification from both the government's and university's positions on a number of issues related to potential nuclear development in Saskatchewan. All the questions are directed to the government of Saskatchewan while questions 4 and 5 are also relevant to the university and to the Expert Review Panel, as an imminent decision will be made respecting Saskatchewan's proposal for isotope production and for the development of a Nuclear Studies Centre.

**1. Power Generation for Saskatchewan**

Dan Perrin's recent report "Future of Uranium Public Consultation Process" clearly showed overwhelming public opposition to several potential nuclear development options for Saskatchewan, including power generation. The report concluded that the overwhelming response to the public consultation was that nuclear power should not be a choice for Saskatchewan.

Many jurisdictions worldwide are rejecting nuclear energy for various reasons. There is medical evidence suggesting various potential health hazards are associated with uranium development, nuclear energy and radioactive waste.<sup>1 2 3 4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Human Health Implications of Uranium Mining and Nuclear Power Generation", Dr. Cathy Vakil M.D., C.C.F.P. F.C.F.P. Dr. Linda Harvey B.Sc, M.Sc., M.D. [www.safewater.org/.../HumanHealthImplicationsUraniumNuclear.pdf](http://www.safewater.org/.../HumanHealthImplicationsUraniumNuclear.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Families Against Radiation Exposure, May 12, 2009 letter to Michael Binder Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, <http://www.ph-fare.com/index.php?article=159>, FARE website: <http://www.ph-fare.com/>

<sup>3</sup> Childhood Leukemia and Cancers Near German Nuclear Reactors: Significance, Context, and Ramifications of Recent Studies, Rudi Nussbaum, *Journal of Occupational Environmental Health*. July-September, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Nuclear cancer risk 'doubled' 10 January 2008, <http://www.channel4.com/news/articles/society/health/nuclear+cancer+risk+doubled/1300847>

New nuclear power in Ontario has been put on hold due to high escalating costs as well as long delays in construction and repair of existing reactors. BC has an energy plan of no nuclear power and a law that all uranium deposits will remain undeveloped. Nova Scotia is putting into law the moratorium on the exploration and mining of uranium. Sweden, Germany and Belgium are phasing out nuclear power generation in pursuit of renewable options, particularly wind.<sup>5</sup>

Citizens want our government to move to renewable sustainable options as our major energy source. Jurisdictions in Canada and around the world are expanding sustainable, renewable, alternative energies including hydro, wind, solar, geo-thermal, cogeneration and biomass. They are finding it possible to adapt power grids to accommodate far higher levels of intermittent renewable power as base load than had previously been considered practical. Ontario has a new Green Energy Act and a feed-in tariff program (FIT).

FIT guarantees a price paid to producers for energy generated from renewable sources. This approach has been successful in various European countries and has been adopted in countries around the world including regions of China and India. The Ontario Power Authority is responsible for administering the new program. In the USA, President Obama has invested six times more per capita than Canada in renewable energy and energy efficiency.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, green energy and green technologies are creating a thriving, new, green economy and jobs for today and tomorrow.

- a. ***Given the overwhelming opposition to nuclear power, its safety issues and high cost, Saskatchewan's small population base, low gas prices, and short fall in provincial revenues, does this government intend to support development of a nuclear reactor to supply the power needs of Saskatchewan?***
- b. ***Is government supporting a small nuclear reactor(s) for the oil sands? If so, why?***
- c. ***Does the government have any agreements with Bruce Power, Cameco or any oil companies for the development of a nuclear reactor(s)? We request full disclosure of agreements.***
- d. ***Is this government planning on having a mix of renewable, sustainable, green energy as the prime source of new power generation for our province? If not, why not?***
- e. ***Will this government implement a Green Energy Act, a feed-in tariff program and a smart grid for our province? If not, why not?***

## **2. Information for General Public and Education of Students.**

This government spent approximately \$3 million promoting nuclear energy as the desirable power source. Governments need to be factual and objective. It is dishonest and deceptive to use terminology describing nuclear energy as sustainable, safe and clean, when none of this is true. In the UDP report, information was not provided to the public on sustainable renewable energy as an alternative. As the Perrin's report concluded, citizens want *factual information about sustainable, renewable, green energy alternatives* and about our power needs. Located in our own Saskatchewan communities are experts in green energy alternatives able to provide this information.

- a. ***What plans does government have to devote resources for providing factual information about sustainable, renewable alternative green energy equivalent to those promoting nuclear power, information that is free from corporate and this government's nuclear bias?***

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<sup>5</sup> "Future of Uranium Public Consultation Process," Dan Perrin, August 2009, The Context, page 25. [www.saskuranium.ca/](http://www.saskuranium.ca/)

<sup>6</sup> Tim Weis, Pembina Institute, Presentation: "Renewable is Doable" U of S Law Library, September 8, 2009.

### **3. Storage of Radioactive Nuclear Waste In Saskatchewan**

Eighty-six (86%) of people participating in the consultation process were strongly against nuclear waste disposal and storage in Saskatchewan. Many had concerns around the costs associated with storage and with the eventual closing and decommissioning of nuclear facilities. Others pointed to the need to ensure that the technical expertise associated with storing nuclear waste would be tested for longer than a period of 50 or 60 years. They said that the half-life of uranium was so long that future generations of Saskatchewan people would be burdened with the management of this waste for hundreds of years after this population made a decision to go ahead with nuclear waste disposal and storage.”<sup>7</sup>

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) doesn't list Manitoba as a place for storing irradiated nuclear materials. This may be attributed to Manitoba's law 'The High Level Radioactive Waste Act' making storage of used nuclear fuel illegal. Other jurisdictions would gladly get rid of their nuclear waste and ship it to Saskatchewan for storage. The majority of citizens feel that Saskatchewan should not become a 'radioactive dumping ground province for other jurisdictions' nuclear waste.

***a. Is government going to support designation of a storage site in our province for nuclear wastes and accept these hazardous materials from other jurisdictions? If so, why?***

***b. Like Manitoba, will this government introduce a law making storage of other jurisdictions' radioactive nuclear waste in Saskatchewan illegal? If not, why not?***

### **4. Research, Training and Development at the U of S- A Nuclear Studies Centre**

“The Saskatchewan government and the University of Saskatchewan have submitted a joint proposal to the federal government's Expert Review Panel to establish The Canadian Neutron Source to produce medical isotopes, act as a research reactor, and facilitate establishment of a national academic centre for nuclear research and development.”<sup>8</sup>

One month before the release of the Perrin report this August, an article dated July 17, 2009 in the 'On Campus Newsletter' (OCN) confirmed that a Nuclear Studies Centre has been under discussion and development for the past year. The public wasn't notified about this Centre before planning began.

Apparently this Centre intends to address various points in the nuclear cycle, including exploration and mining, power production, and waste storage. The article reveals a defined role for the centre of managing the relationship between six clusters of research and academic programs – innovation; northern development; nuclear medicine and health; mineral research and environmental science; neutron, radiation and nuclear science and engineering; and nuclear, hydrogen and novel fuel energy.

Recently, the Star Phoenix reported the U of S signed a memorandum of understanding with a nuclear research laboratory in the USA in March that would allow the two institutions to collaborate on research and demonstration projects on energy sources including uranium, nuclear energy and oil sands.<sup>9</sup>

Perrin's report found that 42% opposed uranium development, research and training. Reasons for opposition included: the need to pursue green alternative energy and technology, nuclear energy was nonrenewable, concerns about the related costs and the issues around training people in an area that may be short-lived. Other concerns were about any investment supporting nuclear proliferation, health and safety challenges associated with hazardous uranium, including exposure through research,

<sup>7</sup> “Future of Uranium Public Consultation Process,” Dan Perrin, August 2009, pages 55,56 [www.saskuranium.ca/](http://www.saskuranium.ca/)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, The Context, page 25. [www.saskuranium.ca/](http://www.saskuranium.ca/)

<sup>9</sup> Jeanette Stewart, The Star Phoenix October 14, 2009.

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/health/eyes+partnership+nuclear+studies+centre/2105028/story.htm>

development, and training.<sup>10</sup>

Besides the above issues, our concerns about this Centre are: It was planned without taxpayer's knowledge. The proposed new reactor of 20 MW is bigger than the existing Slowpoke reactor; emitting more cancer causing radioactive tritium and radioactive carbon emissions into the air and water on a regular basis. It would also give off gamma-emitting radioactive gases – isotopes of krypton, argon and xenon - into the air. This research has the potential to cause harm to students, our citizens, employees, and the outcomes may affect other populations on our planet. The university would be remiss in not addressing these concerns using the moral barometer of 'do no harm' as no level of radiation has been established as safe and harmless. As well, this government wasn't elected with the mandate of developing nuclear energy and a Nuclear Studies Centre.

**a. Why did the government and the university go ahead with planning a Nuclear Studies Centre without the knowledge and support of taxpayers?**

**How was the direction and development of the Centre determined?**

**Who was involved in this decision?**

**In view that the Planning and Priorities Committee has been quoted of being involved in the planning of this Centre, who are the members of this committee?**

**b. Who would be funding this Centre?**

**What agreements are in place or being planned between the government, the university and any other parties such as Bruce Power and Cameco regarding a Nuclear Studies Centre?**

**Have Bruce Power, Cameco or other corporations made donations for the Centre?**

**If agreements or donations have been made, we request full disclosure.**

**c. Will plans for this Centre be cancelled due to any of these factors? Overwhelming opposition from many taxpayers, safety issues, government not supporting development of a nuclear reactor to supply the power needs of Saskatchewan, no acceptance of the proposed reactor for isotope production and research, no business case for a reactor and the recent shortfall in provincial revenues?**

**d. Is the government and the university planning on establishing a research centre of excellence for conducting research in sustainable, renewable, energy rather than pursuing the development of a centre for nuclear research? If this isn't the plan, why isn't the university going in the direction of clean green research?**

## **5. Production of Medical Isotopes**

There is need to evaluate options for diagnostic tools and technologies to produce isotopes, and a need to examine other alternatives for meeting medical needs. We understand many other proposals using various methods for producing isotopes have been submitted to the federal government's Expert Review Panel including the following.

McMaster University proposed that their existing reactor could gear up and supply four times Canada's isotope requirements within 18 months.

Manitoba's partnership Prairie Isotope Production Enterprise (PIPE), a not-for-profit partnership, submitted a proposal of producing isotopes using the accelerator method for \$35 million. This proposal has little regulatory hassle and will be ready in 3 years.

Saskatchewan government and the university proposed a Saskatoon-based 20 MW nuclear reactor for producing isotopes and for research that costs \$500 million to \$750 million. Saskatchewan would pay

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<sup>10</sup> "Future of Uranium Public Consultation Process," Dan Perrin, August 2009, pages 99,100,101. [www.saskuranium.ca/](http://www.saskuranium.ca/)

25% of construction costs and would pay an additional 25% for on going operating costs of \$45 million to \$70 million annually. The nuclear reactor would tentatively open in 2016.<sup>11</sup> Costs may be higher and it may take longer to have isotopes available, as cost overruns and many long delays in building nuclear reactors have been the norm.

We are deeply concerned about having a *second and bigger nuclear reactor* at the U of S and in Saskatoon. Some of our concerns have been indentified on the previous page, but need repeating. Nuclear reactors routinely give off cancer causing radioactive hydrogen (tritium)<sup>12</sup> and radioactive carbon (carbon-14) into the air and the water. Our water supply may be jeopardized.<sup>13</sup> Nuclear plants also give off gamma-emitting radioactive gases into the air – isotopes of krypton, argon and xenon. As well, nuclear accidents do happen. We have over 18,000 young students on campus and over 225,000 residents in Saskatoon. The university has the moral and ethical responsibility of practicing the principle of ‘do no harm’ and must not engage in activities that harm our citizens, students, employees and other populations. Taxpayers have not been given information about the proposed second reactor on campus and have been excluded from important decisions, which affect us. As taxpayers, we would be paying for this risky, expensive venture. Concern is that this proposal was unethically crafted as a stepping-stone to open the door for developing the uranium industry for purposes other than producing isotopes for medical use.

Another technology used for diagnosis is the PET scan (Positron Emission Tomography). Saskatchewan doesn’t have any PET scans. The Vancouver PETSCAN Centre began operating in 2000 and represents an investment of approximately \$4 million, including the cost of building the facility at the BC Research and Innovation Complex, the PET scanner, associated computer hardware and laboratory equipment.<sup>14</sup> According to another source, in 2003, the PET machine cost was approximately \$1million to \$2.5million.<sup>15</sup> Even if the cost of owning and setting up a PET scan has increased five times since 2000 for a cost of \$20million, this course is cheaper than Saskatchewan’s proposed nuclear reactor that is in the range of \$125million-\$187.5million.

Having a PET scan(s) in this province and obtaining isotopes from another Canadian source may be an option due to the high cost of Saskatchewan’s proposal for a nuclear reactor. Citizens have at least four concerns: safety, the added risk of a second nuclear reactor, the probability of not having isotopes produced for at least seven years , and the high cost?.

***a. What plans does this government have to purchase a PET scan(s) for Saskatchewan?***

***b. Will the government and the university withdraw their proposal for producing isotopes due to the four concerns mentioned above?***

## **6. Public Concerns about the Involvement and Public Participation of First Nations and other Aboriginal Peoples, and the Duty to Consult.**

Perrin’s report states that throughout the consultation process, many argued that the public process wasn’t adequate for seeking input from First Nations peoples and other Aboriginals. Not only is there

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<sup>11</sup> Saskatchewan Submits Proposal For Production of Medical isotopes, August 04,2009.

[www.gov.sk.ca/news?newsId=0cc63a53-5c73-4e6b-aed6...](http://www.gov.sk.ca/news?newsId=0cc63a53-5c73-4e6b-aed6...)

<sup>12</sup> Tritium from Nuclear Power Plants: Its Biological Hazard, Nuclear Information and Resource Centre, <http://www.nirs.org/radiation/tritium/tritiumhome.htm>

<sup>13</sup> Ontario Drinking Water Advisory Council (ODWAC), *Report and Advice on the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standard for Tritium*, <http://www.odwac.gov.on.ca/>

<sup>14</sup> PETSCAN Vancouver, About Us, [http://www.petscan.ca/news\\_nationalpost\\_20010709\\_2.htm](http://www.petscan.ca/news_nationalpost_20010709_2.htm)

<sup>15</sup> Bay Area Breast Cancer Network On line, 2003, <http://www.babcn.org/images/news/petscan.htm>

a legal requirement for proper consultation, First Nations Peoples also hold the traditional belief of being the stewards of the land and environment.

***a. What plans does the government have to seek appropriate consultation with First Nations and other Aboriginal Peoples, without presenting a nuclear bias?***

**7. Purchase of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL)**

The commercial side of AECL is for sale. It is our view that the role of the government is not to get into the business of selling Candu reactors, OR use our taxpayer's money for any nuclear business venture. In public, Mr. Wall, you have expressed interest in purchasing AECL.

***a. Is the government going to submit a bid or a partnering bid for purchasing AECL's commercial side? If so, why?***

Hallmarks of our democracy are input from citizens, an open, honest and transparent governance and accountability for decisions and actions that affect taxpayers, our society and future generations. Governments need not only to make decisions that are economically feasible and fiscally responsible, but also to make decisions that are morally right and correct for all citizens and for our environment. We look forward to your expeditious replies, hopefully before the Christmas season. Thank you for your anticipated responses and follow-up, both of which we would hope cause further public discussions.

Sincerely,

Tony Haynes  
Coordinator, Office for Justice and Peace

Advisors: Darlene Demeria, Mildred Kerr, Brian Murphy, Judy Schachtel, Virginia Scissons, Carol Zubiak.

cc. Very Rev. Ron Beechinor, Bishop Bryan Bayda, Bishop Cindy Halmarson, Bishop Rodney Bowles, Saskatoon Inner Council of Churches, AECL, NWMO, Hon. Lisa Raitt, Minister of Natural Resources, Hon. Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health, Hon. Dr. C. Bennett, Hon. Kristy Duncan, Hon. D. McGuinty, Medical Directors of Nuclear Medicine-Saskatoon and Regina Health Regions, Dr. Ann Doig, President CMA, SMA, President of U of S Student's Union, Dwain Lingenfelter, Dr. Ryan Meili, Presidents of the Sask. Political Parties, Mayor Don Atchison and members of Saskatoon city council, FSIN, Métis Nation –Saskatchewan (MN-S), First Nations University, Saskatchewan Environmental Society, Clean Green Saskatchewan, Dr. Jim Harding, Dr. David Suzuki, KAIROS.

