



**The United Church  
of Canada  
General Council**

# **GC38 The Nuclear and Uranium Mining Industry (2003N776)**

True Document Date: August 15, 2003

**Theological Rationale:** The United Church Creed states that:

“We are called to be the church;  
to celebrate God’s presence,  
to live with respect in Creation,  
to love and serve others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,”

**WHEREAS** Canada produces 35% of the world’s uranium, some 27 million pounds in 2001 (CNSC Annual Report, 2001, p.22) and needs to be proportionally accountable for the hazards and by-products of the industry; and

**WHEREAS** Canada has accumulated 37,854 tonnes of high level nuclear waste from reactors (CNSC Annual Report, 2001, p. 21), which is lethal for thousands of years, and which, after 60 years, scientists still do not know how to dispose of safely; and

**WHEREAS** AECL spent \$700 million dollars over 15 years to develop a deep rock Disposal Plan, and a Scientific Review Group found various assumptions and procedures of the plan to be problematic, and the Seaborn Panel spent 8 years and \$8 million dollars to find the Proposal not socially acceptable, with 99 deficiencies to be further addressed,

and then the Government of Canada in December of 2002 legislated the whole issue back to the producers to solve; and

**WHEREAS** the Government of Canada has been financially propping up the industry, spending \$58 million dollars each year from parliamentary appropriations to operate CNSC (Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission), and since 1951 has awarded the industry some \$60 billion dollars in subsidies, plus export loans of \$600 million dollars to China, and \$329 million dollars to Romania; (E-mail of article in Ottawa Citizen, June 21/01, by Dave Martin, researcher for the Sierra Club); and

**WHEREAS** Canada has a Protocol with the IAEA in Vienna (International Atomic Energy Agency) that its uranium will not be used for nuclear weapons, but each year exports 11 million pounds of uranium yellowcake to the USA, which, when processed, is labeled as "US Material", (Dr. Donald Lee, Report of the Joint federal-Provincial Panel, 1997, Cumulative Observations, p. 25.), (BriarPatch, May 1993, p. 190); and

**WHEREAS** the USA at its plant in Paducah, Kentucky takes the U2O2 from the burnt uranium fuel, to prepare "depleted uranium" to be used by Aerojet Ordnance of Downey, California, and Honeywell Inc., of Hopkins, Minnesota in manufacturing ammunition that is hardened and pyrophoric so that it slices through tanks and bursts into flames, also spreading radioactivity; (E-Mail from Rick Rozoff, Depleted Uranium Watch, March 2/02 Article by Dr. Helen Caldicott entitled Medical Consequences of Depleted Uranium). Also, (E-mail from Rick Rozoff, Depleted Uranium Watch, Mar.2/01); and

**WHEREAS** some 320 tonnes of ammunition with depleted uranium was used in the Gulf War with Iraq, and since then also used in Kosovo, Bosnia, and Afghanistan; and

**WHEREAS** the ammunition with depleted uranium explodes, bursts into flames and burns everything around it, spreading radioactivity into the soil and water, which remains radioactive for thousands of years, so that some 7000 children in Iraq are dying each year from leukemia; and

**WHEREAS** little is known about the effects of alpha radiation on plants, animals, fish and humans, given off in the process of mining and milling uranium, and about how to calculate relatively safe doses; and

**WHEREAS** alpha radiation has been rated as 4 times that of gamma radiation, but now has been raised to 40 times gamma radiation by the Canadian Environmental Protection Agency, and though these little particles of alpha radiation are quite different from gamma rays, yet in their decay they are potent enough to damage genetic and somatic cells, (Canadian Environmental Protection Act, Priority Substance List, Revised Draft, July 2001, pp. 66-72); and

**WHEREAS** Dr. Ward Whicker, radiobiologist at the University of Colorado wrote on October, 2002 that, "We have very little specific information on the appropriate RBE factor (Relative Biological Effectiveness) for alpha particles with respect to reproduction, and on the relative distribution of alpha emitting radionuclides in the gonadal tissues of reference organisms." He also acknowledged that few field tests have been carried out on the biota; (E-mail message from Dr. Ward Whicker, State University of Colorado, Oct. 8, 2002);

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the 38th General Council of the United Church to request of the Government of Canada, and the Department of the Environment to:

1. That it withhold exports of uranium to countries manufacturing ammunition with depleted uranium;
2. That it initiate field tests to research the actual damage being done to the biota and to humans by alpha radiation.

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Document Type: [Social Policy](#)

General Council: [GC43 or earlier](#)

Originating Body: [Other](#)