

Saskatchewan Bishops call for critical reflection on uranium mining and a proposed nuclear power plant in Saskatchewan

The Bishops of the Anglican, Evangelical Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Ukrainian Catholic churches in Saskatchewan call on their members and all Saskatchewan citizens to consider with care the issues surrounding the proposed expansion of the uranium industry in Saskatchewan and make their views known to the Government of Saskatchewan.

The Government of Saskatchewan is exploring "value-added" initiatives to expand the uranium industry in our province, including the possibility of a nuclear power plant being built in Saskatchewan. Bruce Power, the country's only private nuclear generating company, has deemed an area of Saskatchewan (roughly from Lloydminster to Prince Albert) to be a potentially suitable site for such a development. In March 2009 a government-appointed panel is expected to make recommendations regarding such initiatives. It is critical that any recommendations be made only after full and open consultation with the people of this province.

Christian churches affirm that God created the earth and that God continues to establish and preserve a just and ordered life for all creation. Human beings are part of the vast ecosystem of the planet. Choices made by human beings must respect God's creation in its careful interrelationship of earth, water, air and all living things. Exploiting the earth's resources without regard for the consequences is sinful against God and God's creation, according to Christian belief. Technology and economic development, including mining and power generation, must be subject to critical reflection in light of the impact that such actions have on people and the environment in the present and into the future.

The Bishops recognize the global need for urgent action on climate change and the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from coal-burning power plants in Saskatchewan. They appreciate the intention of the Government in proposing nuclear power to reduce emissions. At the same time, they see the necessity for careful examination of the costs and benefits of a range of energy options and encourage the Government to invite public participation in developing a new energy strategy for Saskatchewan.

The Bishops call on Premier Brad Wall, Crown Corporations Minister Ken Cheveldayoff, Environment Minister Nancy Heppner, Energy and Resources Minister Bill Boyd, First Nations Minister June Draude, Enterprise Saskatchewan Minister Lyle Stewart, and the Government of Saskatchewan to provide adequate opportunities for Saskatchewan citizens to engage in open, informed discussion based on unbiased and complete information before the Government acts on recommendations from the nuclear industry or the government-appointed panel.

Regina, SK. February 25, 2009

- +Rodney Andrews, Anglican Bishop of Saskatoon
- +Bryan Bayda, CSsR, Ukrainian Eparchial Bishop of Saskatoon
- +Cynthia G Halmarson, Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
- +Daniel Bohan, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Regina
- +Gregory Kerr-Wilson, Anglican Bishop of Qu'Appelle
- +Albert Legatt, Roman Catholic Bishop of Saskatoon
- +Albert Thévenot, M.Afr., Roman Catholic Bishop of Prince Albert