

Some Comments on Uranium Exploration: Drilling

Miles Goldstick, October 27, 2006

In August 1979, due to public concern in British Columbia, Canada (B.C.) over uranium exploration causing contamination of water, the B.C. Royal Commission of Inquiry into Uranium Mining published an interim report dealing specifically with uranium exploration. The report states:

“A potential hazard in our opinion, is that drill holes will disrupt the pattern of groundwater flow causing a compositional change in the water and leading to contamination of a water supply previously unaffected. The possibility of increased uranium content, or the introduction of other constituents such as radium-226 or toxic heavy metals associated with uranium deposits, makes the problem particularly difficult. The contaminated water might be used for public drinking purposes, or irrigation, or for the watering of livestock.... Additional contamination may arise from drilling muds, sludges and unused cuttings.” (1)

In January 1980, recognising the threat of surface and groundwater contamination from uranium exploration, the District of Salmon Arm, B.C. municipal government outlawed uranium exploration in their watershed by declaring it a nuisance under the B.C. Health Act. A copy of the signed and carried motion is attached.

Over the same water quality concerns, two years earlier in 1978 in the U.S., the Colorado State Water Quality Control Board asked the Federal Environmental Protection Agency and the State Land Use Commission to stop uranium exploration in Parker County, Colorado. The Board was concerned about the County's groundwater, which supplied half the state's population with drinking water.

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(1) Bates, D.V.; Murray, J.W.; and Raudsepp V. 1979-08-15. “The Commissioner's First Interim Report on Uranium Exploration.” 19 pp. See pp. 2-3. B.C. Royal Commission of Inquiry into Uranium Mining.

DISTRICT OF SALMON ARM

Date January 14, 1980.

Moved by Alderman "D.J. MacQuarrie"

Seconded by Alderman "R.H. Smith"

THAT: the Local Board of Health, for the purpose of protecting the potability of all domestic water sources in and for the community, does hereby declare all Uranium exploration within those watershed areas serving the community, without as well as within Municipal boundaries, a nuisance under Section 64 of the Health Act of British Columbia.

Certified True Copy


Clerk

Carried: "L.M. Lund"
Mayor