



Oral presentation

Exposé oral

**Written submission from
Candyce Paul**

**Mémoire de
Candyce Paul**

In the Matter of the

À l'égard de

**Cameco Corporation, McArthur River
Operation and Key Lake Operation**

**Cameco Corporation, établissements de
McArthur River et de Key Lake**

Application for the renewal of uranium
mine/mill licences for McArthur River
Operation and Key Lake Operation

Demande visant le renouvellement des permis
d'exploitation de mines et d'usines de
concentration d'uranium pour les
établissements de McArthur River et de
Key Lake

Commission Public Hearing

Audience publique de la Commission

June 7-8, 2023

7-8 juin 2023

ATT: Canadian Nuclear Safety Committee

I am Candyce Paul, a member of English River First Nation, residing on Treaty Ten Territory at LaPlonge Reserve. I have been following the activities of Cameco as they operate on the traditional territory of the Dene people.

Their uranium mining operations have been disrupting the Dene hunting and gathering activities for decades now. The traditional land-users have been and continue to be increasingly concerned with the heavy foot-print that Cameco is leaving on the environment both here and the places their product is used. The disruption and years of contamination are extolling a heavy price on the wildlife, fish, plants and medicines. The people are no longer able to trust the staples on which they used to depend for food. Studies have shown changes to the DNA of microorganisms. All life is connected. What affects the bottom of the food chain, eventually impacts the rest.

Another serious concern is the continuous radioactivity coming off the waste rock from the mines and the piles yet to be processed that are sitting on the surface. How many tons of contaminated waste hauled in from other places has been dumped into the tailings ponds? How much and what is stored in the mine shafts at Rabbit Lake Mine that was brought in by military transport planes? Not even our MLA was privilege to that “classified” information. Is the CNSC even aware of this?

Workers are told prior to CNSC inspections, to step up all safety protocols and clean everything up. During regular operations it is normal to by-pass alarms that filters are full to avoid slowing down production at Key Lake Mill. CNSC is always quick to inform us that workers can report inappropriate activity and practices but there is a lack of trust that worker’s anonymity will be protected.

When the Key Lake Molybdenum Plant had a leak of water through the uranium contaminated floor of the building which then contaminated the ground water,

there was a 6 month gap before it was reported to English River First Nation. Band members were upset and angry that Cameco's inspections of the plant and test wells were too infrequent to have caught this serious leak in time. When they did finally report to our membership their nonchalant attitude showed a total lack of respect toward the stewards of the land that they operate on. They had no solution then as to how they would clean it up and we have been waiting for a public report back on what they have done 4 years later. It was especially disturbing when former mill workers reported publicly that Cameco knew there was a problem with the corrosion of that floor previously. Because they were taken to task Cameco admitted they took the cheap fix which eventually led to this leak.

I, myself, asked the CNSC representative at that meeting, what kind of guidelines CNSC has regarding building construction and materials. I was shocked and horrified to learn that the CNSC have none. I was told that Cameco would have had to follow the Canada Building Code, which outlines the bare minimum requirements. One would expect that the nuclear/uranium industry regulator would and should ensure that facility construction is robust enough to secure the toxic and radioactive materials from escaping to the environment. This was a failure of both Cameco and the CNSC. The people on whose land these mines are located demand better of both Cameco and CNSC.

These are only a couple of the reasons that some members of English River First Nation are ready to say enough is enough. This company has done enough damage to the lands and waters of the Dene. They have misled the entire north of Saskatchewan into false promises just so they can continue to bleed Dene land for investors' profits. While Cameco sponsors a Center of Excellence in Math and Science in a Saskatoon High School, English River First Nation struggles to be able to hire a high school math teacher. Our students deserve a chance at other careers and professions that will enable them to provide for their families without the risk of shortening their lives for this radioactive corporation. They deserve to be able to live on and use their traditional lands without seeing the scars this industry will leave behind.

A 20 year license is not acceptable. This will lead to further complacency for an industry that already is known to go the cheap route, take short cuts, and break the regulations. I am not willing to trust that Cameco in conjunction with CNSC have the best interests of ensuring that they can clean up and permanently restore out future generations' land and water to its pristine state.

I respectfully advise Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission deny Cameco's request.

I also request that CNSC provide answers to the questions of what is being dumped in the tailings, what was brought to Rabbit Lake Mine, and who was consulted from the Treaty Ten rights holders.

Muscatello, Jorgelina Rosa

Chronic toxicity and accumulation of uranium in the aquatic invertebrate *Chironomus tentans* (2004)

<https://ecommons.usask.ca/handle/10388/etd-05242012-131144>