Debunking myths about Point Lepreau:
It's not cheap, not green, not needed

By RAPHAEL SHAY

The Lepreau Decommissioning Caucus, which includes the Conservation Council, the International Institute of Concern for Public Health, the Sierra Club of Canada Atlantic Chapter and the Fundy Baykeeper, voiced their opposition to nuclear power on September 1st in Fredericton. The Caucus demanded that the political parties take a position against refurbishing Lepreau and abandon plans for a second nuclear reactor in the province.

Willi Nolan, a representative of the International Institute of Concern for Public Health, said, “Lepreau was an expensive mistake, environmentally and financially.”

The Caucus has produced a flyer that attempts to debunk three myths with nuclear power, that it is green, there is a need for it, and that it is cheap.

According to the Caucus, nuclear power produces lots of greenhouse gas emissions. The Advertising Standards Canada recently ruled that CANU reactor and de-fuelling campaigns cannot be referred to as "emissions free." Point Lepreau has so far produced thousands of tons of highly toxic and radioactive waste. The Canadian Nuclear Waste Management Organization, which is in charge of finding solutions to dispose of this waste, says it will remain toxic indefinitely. Point Lepreau also releases tritium and other radioactive toxins into the air and in the Bay of Fundy.

"This is an unethical burden to place on future generations," said Nolan.

Nuclear energy is the most expensive energy ever produced in New Brunswick. Before it was shut down, electricity produced at Point Lepreau cost 10.97 cents/kWh in 2006 dollars. Additionally, NB Power has had to borrow $125 million, investing it in the hope of one day coming up with the $799.3 million necessary to cover radioactive waste storage management.

Gretchen Fitzgerald from the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club of Canada pointed out that Nova Scotia has placed a ban on mining uranium. This fuel which is used to power nuclear reactors is a non-renewable resource. The uranium used to fuel nuclear reactors is a non-renewable resource. According to many energy experts, uranium reserves will be depleted in less than 35 years if the nuclear industry expands.

According to the Caucus, New Brunswick does not need the Point Lepreau nuclear reactor.

"With the reactor shut down for 2 years there have been no power shortages. We are paying less for replacement power than the cost of electricity from a refurbished Lepreau. The potential exists for considerably more renewable energy, which is now cheaper than nuclear. Energy conservation and efficiency measures have also significantly reduced our demand and more can be done for 5 times less than the price of new nuclear. Electricity can also be purchased as needed from Hydro Quebec far cheaper than Lepreau will produce," said Nolan.

Nolan concluded her presentation by inviting people to join the facebook group "be...nuclear free in this place."

We want to hear about what's going on in your community! Send us articles, letters, story ideas and pictures at editors@nbmediacoop.org.

The NB Media Co-op is a member-funded organization and is completely volunteer run. Be part of the movement for democratic media and become a member today.

There are many ways to get involved. Deliver The Brief in your community, write stories, edit stories, help us organize events in your community and spread the word about independent media in NB.

Contact us at info@nbmediacoop.org.

-Union printed on 30% recycled paper-