



The Brief

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



Willi Nolan of the International Institute of Concern for Public Health speaks at a media conference on nuclear power on September 1st in Fredericton. Photo: Tracy Glynn.

By RAPHAEL SHAY

The Lepreau Decomissioning 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 CANDU reactors 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."

Taking back the night in Fredericton

By MARIE-CHRISTINE ALLARD

"No more silence! No more violence!" shouted a woman on the megaphone, as she led a march of about a hundred women and children through the dark streets of Fredericton. It was the annual Take Back the Night march, organized by the Fredericton Sexual Assault Crisis Centre (FSACC).

Take Back the Night marches happen throughout the world to raise awareness about ongoing sexual violence against women. In Fredericton, march participants came out for a variety of reasons. Some had been victims of sexual assault, others knew victims, and many simply wanted to stand in solidarity with those who had been victimized.

I sat down with FSACC volunteers and Take Back the Night organizers Kimberley Douglass and Joanna Mills to find out more about the annual event.

MCA: What is Take Back the Night about?

KD: Take Back the Night is about women reclaiming – or claiming – the right to walk on the street at night in the dark or anytime that they feel threatened. It's done at night to symbolize the fear that women may have when they are out alone at night.

MCA: Why is the march limited to women and children?

KD: If men want to come and support us we welcome them, but if they walked with us we wouldn't be reclaiming the streets. In order to reclaim the streets, we have to do it ourselves.

MCA: What role can men take?

KD: They can come and see us off. There's a short rally before the march starts and we have a couple of people speak briefly. We have some activities planned for them while they wait for us to come back. Then there is a reception and an art show which we like everyone to come to.

MCA: How did Take Back the Night get started?

KD: Here in Fredericton it was in 1985. There was a conference about violence against women and they held a march that year. There has been a march in Fredericton since then.


MCA: Could you explain what is FSACC and the work it does?

KD: Our primary focus is to ultimately end sexual violence against women. In order to do that we know that we have to empower women and provide them with assistance in acquiring the strength to stand up against violence against women. Our focus is on sexual violence; we have a 24 hour crisis line and we provide some counselling. We are a volunteer organization.

MCA: What do you say to those who argue that such actions are no longer relevant?

KD: Unfortunately, we've gained legal rights, but we have a really difficult time getting the system to enforce those laws. The second wave of feminism brought in all of our legal rights, and made sure that human rights included women's rights, but in the 30 years since then we haven't had a whole lot of action to back that up.

JM: And I think it's people's perception. For example, the law states that someone can't rape their wife. The law may state that, but it doesn't necessarily enforce it. And how do you enforce it when there's a lot of victim blaming. FSACC tries to raise awareness about htis. That's why things like [Take Back the Night] do that. They do raise awareness, hopefully.

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