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Dear Minister Rushton,

Nova Scotians are deeply concerned that your government is currently requesting proposals to grant uranium exploration licences in three communities.

There was no mention of your intention to lift the longstanding legislative ban on uranium mining or the moratorium on fracking throughout the November 2024 election campaign. Since then, there has been no warning or meaningful consultation with Nova Scotians about how uranium explorations could affect their health, property rights or environment.

It is understandably shocking to Nova Scotians that Bill 6 was introduced in the Spring Legislative session, supported by every member of your caucus, and then passed without any community consultation. This blatant disregard is even more troubling given your government's refusal to release the environmental racism panel report about the consequences of infrastructure projects disproportionately borne by African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq people and communities in our province.

In the absence of any citizen engagement or information being provided by the government, hundreds of Nova Scotians are gathering in fire halls and community halls to share their concerns about their property rights, the environmental security of their land, well water, and water sheds, and the health impacts of uranium exploration in Nova Scotia. Property owners are worried about the recent use of section 24 from the Mineral Resources Act to override the wishes of a property owner to allow mineral exploration. Effectively, the government has given itself the power to proceed with its own agenda by allowing a mining corporations to build a road or begin uranium exploration on someone's land against their wishes.

At the same time, the Confederacy of Mi'kmaq Chiefs has issued three public letters noting their grave concerns about the lack of the recognition of their Constitutional right to consultation on natural projects in unceded territory.

While we all want to see our province grow and thrive, it's crucial that Nova Scotians' input shapes economic development plans that serve their communities. Elected leaders never have the right to ignore the people they're meant to serve.



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Echoing Nova Scotians across the province, I ask you to immediately pause the current Request For Proposal (RFP) process until you have undertaken a genuine public engagement process, including meaningful nation-to-nation dialogue with the Mi'kmaq. Nova Scotians have important questions about their property rights, the safety of their well-water and potential impacts on their communities. Your government must provide answers before this highly contentious proposal proceeds.

Sincerely,

Lisa Lachance
MLA, Halifax Citadel-Sable Island
NSNDP Natural Resources critic