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February 29, 2008



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Indigenous Grandmothers and Winona LaDuke Join Indigenous Petitioners Opposing US Nuclear Regulatory Commission Licensing of Cameco Inc.'s ISL Uranium Mine Expansion in Crawford, Nebraska

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Several of the International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers (www.GrandmothersCouncil.org), and Winona LaDuke of Honor the Earth (www.HonorEarth.org) filed supporting affidavits explaining to the NRC panel of administrative judges the significance of continued access to local, pristine water for medicines and ceremonies. The affidavits were filed in support of Indigenous Petitioners who are opposing a proposed license amendment requested by Crow Butte Resources, Inc., a subsidiary of Canadian multinational Cameco, Inc. [NYSE: CCJ] (www.cameco.com), to expand its ISL uranium mine in Crawford, Nebraska near Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. The affidavits submitted were from Indigenous Grandmothers Beatrice Long Visitor Holy Dance and Rita Long Visitor Holy Dance, Oglala Lakota, from Flordemayo, a Nicaraguan Maya, and from Mona Ann Polacca, from the Havasupai, Hopi and Tewa Tribes, and from Winona LaDuke, of Honor the Earth and former Green Party vice-presidential candidate.

The Indigenous Grandmothers pointed out sacredness of water and the use of water to make medicines and conduct sacred ceremonies in addition to being used as a vital natural resource. “When we come into this life, our mothers carry us in their bodies, and we are in the water. That is our first experience in this life, being in the water, and so it is holy for us. We carry that relationship with water through our lives...Lakota people need to have good water nearby for use for our ceremonies....the water purifies us,” explains Beatrice Long Visitor Holy Dance. Indigenous Grandmother Flordemayo explains, “I work with healing sicknesses, and I use water often. To be useful, in a healing, the water must be intact....the water is vital to [the sweat lodge ceremony], and it must be pure, uncontaminated water for the ceremony to be effective.”

Indigenous Grandmother Polacca adds, “[w]e must not allow these teachings about water to be forgotten. The water must be kept pure for the people. The water is what we come from, and it is through the water that we are all related with peoples all over the World. The family of human beings is the family of water, and water is the basis of life around us.” Winona LaDuke states, “[i]t is time for a new energy policy that is not built on the continued suffering of Native peoples and their communities who can rarely wield sufficient political power to successfully protect their interests.”

The In Situ Leach (ISL) mining process involves injecting a bicarbonate solution into the water aquifer which releases uranium from sand particles in the aquifer and also stirs up and releases radioactive and toxic chemicals like Radon, Thorium, Radium and Arsenic into the environment. The uranium is removed from the water and a form of “geo-chemically changed” water is re-injected into the aquifer. No ISL uranium mine has ever returned the water in the mined aquifer to baseline levels and ISL mining may be responsible for elevated kidney and cancer problems and the closure of 98 wells to due arsenic contamination at Pine Ridge.

[Donations](#) for this effort may be made to Plenty International, fiscal sponsor of the project (www.thefarm.org), and earmarked for “**Save Crow Butte**”: POB 394, Summertown, TN 38483; www.savecrowbutte.org.

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Aligning for Responsible Mining (ARM) is an indigenous-led non-profit organization dedicated to the application of the International Precautionary Principle to mining and opposition to “Abusive Mining” which is mining that fails to satisfy the Precautionary Principle. More information on the Crow Butte case may be found at www.SaveCrowButte.org and information from ARM’s Uranium Advocacy Project may be found at www.UraniumIsNotMyFriend.com.