

MEDIA RELEASE

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Still No Consultation on Bill 6 & Decisions for Uranium Mining in Nova Scotia

Mi'kma'ki - In March, Premier Houston called an urgent meeting with the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs (Assembly) to discuss the plans to lift the decades-long bans on uranium mining. It was during that meeting that the Assembly spoke openly about significant concerns regarding the process, restrictive deadlines, lack of consultation and, ultimately, the potential for damage to our natural resources as a result of this activity.

Months have passed since the Assembly publicly called for engagement with the provincial government on changes they are making to natural resources legislation in Nova Scotia.

"Our voices must be heard before decisions are made; true collaboration is not merely a formality, but a constitutional duty that honours our Rights and our role as owners of the lands and resources," said Chief Tamara Young, co-lead for the Environment, Energy and Mines portfolio with the Assembly.

Despite the call for timely and meaningful consultation, the Mi'kmaq have yet to receive any correspondence on the addition of uranium to the Critical Minerals Mining Strategy or the three proposed sites which Nova Scotia has requested proposals for uranium exploration in Mi'kma'ki. The recent announcement indicating that there have been no successful applicants for these three sites suggests that the industry, Nova Scotians and the Mi'kmaq are not prepared for this activity and that these developments are happening too rapidly. The ban on uranium mining has been in place for decades for a multitude of reasons; detrimental impacts on our environment are at the top of the list.

Recently, Chief Young presented before Nova Scotia's Standing Committee on Natural Resources about the province's constitutional and legal duty to consult.

"Nova Scotia may be proud of the commitments outlined in Pillar 3: Opportunities with Mi'kmaw Partners in the Critical Minerals Strategy, but emphasizing collaboration, knowledge sharing, and capacity building cannot replace the need to consult and engage the Mi'kmaq early, before decisions are made," said Chief Young.

The Assembly is pressing for the provincial government to take their concerns seriously and acknowledge our Mi'kmaw Rights, as outlined in Section 35 of the Constitution. There is a feeling of disappointment that the Assembly has not seen any progress or commitment to transparency from this Nova Scotia government. The lack of consultation raises significant concerns about accountability and respect for our Rights and long-established processes. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which Canada adopted into its legislation, further emphasizes the importance of free, prior and informed consent, which the Assembly wants Nova Scotia to take seriously. So far, Nova Scotia has not been adhering to UNDRIP's principles.

"The Mi'kmaq are not opposed to ethical and sustainable development, but we will not accept processes that disregard our Aboriginal and Treaty Rights. Nova Scotia must engage with us meaningfully instead of taking steps backwards in our Nation-to-Nation relationship," said Chief Young.

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