

Press Release  
Port Hope Community Health Concerns Committee

## **Health Canada's "top radiation scientist" says uranium contamination "typical of...Canadians".**

The Health Concern Committee's position on Health Canada's November 20 public statement to Port Hope Council

Health Canada's "top radiation scientist", Dr. Jack Cornett, Director of Radiation, presented a response to the Health Concern Committee's Radiobiological Study Findings in an unscheduled attendance to the Port Hope Council meeting, Tuesday Nov 20, 2007 and during an interview with the Northumberland News.

The Committee's view is that Dr. Cornett's position is irresponsible, demonstrating a serious failure of the Canadian federal department of Health to distance itself from the uranium economics and concern itself with the health of the people of Port Hope. Health Canada has gone to extremes to justify its decision not to examine the contamination found in bodies of residents of Port Hope.

To establish credibility for his Department's position, the Director of Radiation has actually made a most absurd and frightening announcement. He has stated that all Canadians' bodies "typically" contain the uranium contaminates identified in the bodies of the 4 retired workers and 5 civilians in Port Hope.

Health Canada establishes uranium contamination as the public baseline in Port Hope and all of Canada

The Health Concerns Committee's study provides conclusive evidence of contamination. That fact will not go away because it is an unpopular reality. Instead of assuring Canadians and taking a responsible public health position, Dr. Cornett ignores Port Hope's wide spread environmental contamination and the lifelong exposure of our residents and workers to radioactive materials.

Parliament and all Canadians should be shocked by Health Canada's announcement. According to Dr. Cornett, "If you went out and measured other people in this community [Port Hope], or other communities in Canada, those measurements [found by UMRC] would be typical of what you would find in Canadians."

Dr Cornett is a former Manager of Environment Research at Atomic Energy Canada Limited, the commercial Crown Corporation that makes and sells the CANDU reactor. Port Hope is the only commercial supplier of CANDU fuels in the world.

Dr. Cornett emailed radiation "dose calculations" to the Port Hope Northumberland News (printed Tuesday Nov 20), saying the radiation dose of the contaminants excreted in the

workers and residents' urine is below the safety standards. He declared the study findings are not a health concern.

The Health Concerns Committee and the Uranium Medical Research Centre outlined the study findings Tuesday November 13, 2007. The signatures of the uranium isotopes found in the subjects' 24-hour urine samples reveal chronic uranium contamination. The workers' bodies, as much as 23 year years since employment, are releasing  $^{236}\text{U}$ , a man-made isotope of uranium found only in spent nuclear reactor fuel.

The results reveal Depleted Uranium (DU) in the urine of one worker; that worker reports making uranium weapons components in Eldorado Nuclear in the 1970's and 1980's. Cameco imported 10 tons of Depleted Uranium in 2004 under an agreement with a US weapons manufacturer.

Three of the former workers and as well as the five civilians in the study have anomalous elevations of the uranium isotope  $^{234}\text{U}$ . The elevated  $^{234}\text{U}$  suggests inhalational exposure to recycled or down-blended industrial uranium. Cameco has set up an enriched uranium "down-blending" production circuit to show the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission it can safely process enriched uranium upwind of downtown Port Hope. A license to make enriched uranium fuels for US and CANDU 6 is about to be granted to Cameco without a full environmental assessment as required by Canadian law.

#### The Health Concerns Committee asked UMRC about the recent Health Canada statements

"The calculation of radiation dose requires knowledge of the amount of uranium in the body and the length of time a patient has been exposed. It is impossible for Health Canada or anyone, using the recent study's publicly released data, to determine how much uranium was inhaled and how much remains in any of the subjects' bodies" says Tedd Weyman, Deputy Director, UMRC. "A scientific dose reconstruction investigation is required; and has not been done for workers or civilians in Port Hope. Without it, dose cannot be determined."

UMRC expressed surprise at Health Canada's statement that the findings are "typical" for Canadians. Mr. Weyman agreed with Dr. Cornett's assessment, that the findings are most likely "typical" for Port Hope's retired nuclear workers and residents living inside the fall-out zone of Cameco's two plants.

Mr. Weyman said, "there are no public data corroborating Dr. Cornett's statement that it is typical for Canadians' bodies to contain spent nuclear reactor fuel, Depleted Uranium or enriched  $^{234}\text{U}$ ". Weyman noted that the study's control samples from persons who don't live or work in Port Hope, show natural uranium, normal levels and none of the contaminants Dr Cornett says are "typical".

The Community Health Concerns Committee has not been contacted by Health Canada about the radiobiology study in Port Hope.