

May 19, 2020

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau  
Hon. Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Natural Resources  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6  
by email (original to follow by post)

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister O'Regan:

**RE: Requests for federal funding  
for development of small modular nuclear reactors (SMNRs) in New Brunswick**

We are a recently formed coalition of groups and individuals in New Brunswick concerned about the unwise use of federal funds for development of “small modular nuclear reactors (SMNRs).” We believe federal and provincial governments need to assist the public and small business in efforts to improve energy efficiency and enable the replacement of current fossil fuels with proven and economical sources of renewable energy.

We wish to express our deep concern about possible federal funding for development of small modular nuclear reactors (SMNRs). We are opposed to nuclear expansion and believe government would be headed in the wrong direction by funding development of SMNRs using public money.

The governments of New Brunswick, Ontario, and Saskatchewan are promising jobs and carbon neutral electricity generation from SMNRs. We are all committed to meeting vital carbon emissions targets. However, untimeliness, steep financial costs, and serious dangers to human health and the environment from nuclear expansion far outweigh any promised benefits. Most Canadians want – and the global environment needs – actions on CO2 emissions and climate change now.

Presently in New Brunswick, construction could begin on many types of proven renewable energy projects which would be generating both electricity flows and cash flows within three to four years and in some cases less. However, SMNRs of the type proposed in New Brunswick need yet to be designed. Prototypes need to be built and proven to be safe, reliable, and economical. Proponents suggest a timeline of at least ten years for the first prototypes to be working. It could take many more years than that, as estimated time frames required for completion and operation are almost always unrealistic and overly optimistic in the early stages of project conception.

## Coalition for Responsible Energy Development in New Brunswick

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With the cost of production of electricity from many renewable projects now being in the three to five cents per kw hour range and dropping, it is unimaginable that these undeveloped SMNRs could produce electricity more economically than the renewable projects. More sustainable and cost effective advantages, including greater job creation, would flow from a focus on renewable energy projects such as wind, solar, geothermal, and tidal sources. As well, a strong financial commitment to energy conservation and efficiency projects would reduce present and future energy requirements.

We are also very concerned about dangerous radioactivity throughout the entire nuclear fuel cycle, from uranium mining, reprocessing of spent fuel , generation, transportation, to radioactive waste storage for many untold generations into the future. Proposals to extract and reprocess spent nuclear fuel waste now in storage from existing nuclear reactors to use as fuel in proposed SMNRs poses particularly serious risks.

In addition, we are alarmed about stated plans for SMNR export after prototypes are developed in Canada. Internationally, there have long been troubling connections between nuclear power generation and nuclear weapons. Globally, Canada has played a role for many decades in this unstable nuclear cycle.

Now is the time for your government to take the lead by resisting costly and dangerous nuclear expansion at home and through exports, while investing in sustainable renewable energy options for the sake of our environment as well as for the health and well-being of future generations.

Sincerely,

David Thompson and Paula Tippett  
for the Coalition for Responsible Energy Development in New Brunswick

cc Blaine Higgs, Premier of New Brunswick  
Green Party of Canada Caucus: Jenica Atwin, Paul Manley, Elizabeth May  
NDP of Canada Critic for Natural Resources: Richard Cannings