

## **Subject: Approval of Uranium and/or Nuclear Projects in Saskatchewan**

### **Submitted by: Investment and Growth Committee**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The world will see strong growth in the need for energy in the coming decades. World wide economic growth will demand more energy. The ability of hydrocarbons to provide that energy is limited, because of the finite nature of supply, the possibly significant role of hydrocarbons in causing global warming, and because of their eventual greater value as chemical feedstock. Relative to other options for the displacement of hydrocarbon-based energy sources, uranium is cost effective and years of operating experience has shown that nuclear energy is safe and has minimal environmental and waste related impacts.

#### **ISSUE**

As a major source of the world's uranium, Saskatchewan has the potential for economic development of major proportions through the addition of other components of the uranium fuel cycle beyond mining and milling in the province. That short- and long-term potential includes, refining, conversion, enrichment, fuel fabrication, energy generation, byproduct management and reprocessing. Developments such as these can originate from private enterprise initiative, public/private/aboriginal partnerships, or pure government support for the infrastructure required for development.

The Federal Government is largely responsible for the approval of projects that involve uranium or any radioactive material processing. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) is the lead federal regulatory agency, but other federal departments and provincial authorities play a role in various aspects of the overall regulatory regime.

Once a project is submitted for approval, it is important that rigorous reviews for safety and environmental soundness be conducted by the Federal agencies. However, undue delays and gridlock due to overlapping jurisdictions could delay a project unnecessarily to the detriment of Saskatchewan business and add delay to the benefits for Saskatchewan residents.

#### **RECOMMENDED**

- 1) That the Government of Saskatchewan facilitate the development of uranium and/or nuclear projects in Saskatchewan by:
  - i) ensuring the timely completion of provincial environmental assessments while still maintaining the same level of strong, robust environmental standards.
  - ii) working closely with federal regulatory authorities to ensure the overall environmental assessment process is well-coordinated and

efficient across both jurisdictions, eliminating any unnecessary overlap and duplication. Nothing could discourage the development of the industry more than protracted studies with overlapping bureaucracy between Provincial and Federal jurisdictions

- 2) That the Government of Canada facilitate the environmental assessment process for uranium and/or nuclear projects in Saskatchewan by ensuring that the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) is staffed and resourced to complete its reviews in a timely manner. If there are impediments to the CNSC completing its job due to gridlock from other jurisdictions, then the Government of Canada needs to act to remove jurisdictional roadblocks.