

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Resolution Supporting Retention of Virginia's Uranium Mining Moratorium

January 17, 2012

WHEREAS, EQAC has received basic background information regarding the moratorium on uranium mining (imposed statewide in 1982) in anticipation of legislative or gubernatorial efforts to lift the moratorium; and

WHEREAS, EQAC has received presentations on this issue from Dan Holmes, Director of State Policy with the Piedmont Environmental Council, and Stephen Walz, the Director of Energy Programs at the Northern Virginia Regional Commission and formerly the Director of the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy; and

WHEREAS, EQAC members have also had access to the National Academy of Sciences, Fairfax Water, Chmura Analytics, Virginia Beach and RTI Socioeconomic reports on uranium mining in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the Chmura study indicates that the adverse economic impact under the worst case scenario is significantly greater than corresponding positive impact in the best case scenario; and

WHEREAS, any future substantive failure of a uranium mining site would require economic support from all the citizens of Virginia for remediation; and

WHEREAS, there is recognition by EQAC that the only uranium deposits that appear to be potentially economically viable for mining at this time are in Pittsylvania County, where mining would have no impact on Fairfax County; and

WHEREAS, the concern exists, though, that there are other uranium occurrences in Virginia, and that past uranium mining lease agreements were established in Fauquier County, within the Occoquan watershed; and

WHEREAS, the Occoquan Reservoir is one of the county's primary sources of drinking water; and

WHEREAS, the quality of this drinking water source can be adversely affected by activities occurring within its watershed; and

WHEREAS, while EQAC does not have a fully comprehensive understanding of the issue at this time, based on the presentations and materials reviewed by EQAC, EQAC does have concerns about the lifting of the moratorium in light of numerous and substantial questions and concerns regarding the potential for adverse environmental impacts to Virginia and the Occoquan Reservoir if uranium was to be mined or milled within the Occoquan watershed; and

WHEREAS, it is EQAC's view that it would be premature to draft regulations pertaining to uranium mining without first addressing concerns identified by the National Academy of Sciences in its report.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that EQAC recommends that the Board of Supervisors request that the Commonwealth not move forward with promulgating regulations pertaining to the mining of uranium; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that EQAC requests that the Board of Supervisors support retention of the moratorium on uranium mining in Virginia.