

MYTH

VS.

FACT

It's no surprise that many of Virginia's prominent, well-funded environmental advocacy organizations oppose uranium mining at Coles Hill. In the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, representatives of the three leading opponents of uranium mining in Virginia – the **Southern Environmental Law Center**, the **Piedmont Environmental Council** and the **Virginia League of Conservation Voters** – went so far as to dismiss the ongoing National Academy of Sciences study of uranium mining in Virginia, saying that they “did not want the study in the first place.” Their promotion of myths in this important public policy debate obscures the issues and misleads the public. See the examples below from many of these groups...and the rebuttals. VUI's position is clear: If the National Academy of Sciences' findings indicate that it is feasible for uranium mining to proceed in Virginia, we hope the Legislature will move forthwith on promulgating regulations.

MYTH

THE PIEDMONT ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL HAS CIRCULATED A MAP OF VIRGINIA ENTITLED 'WATER SUPPLIES POTENTIALLY IMPACTED BY URANIUM MINING' THAT INCLUDES FAIRFAX, TOWN OF ORANGE, FREDERICKSBURG AND SPOTSYLVANIA, AS WELL AS HALIFAX, CLARKSVILLE, AND MECKLENBURG.

– *Piedmont Environmental Council website, February 21, 2011*

FACT

These water supplies are not threatened by Coles Hill or any other uranium deposit. As state regulators have testified, Coles Hill is the only deposit in Virginia worth mining. "With the exception of Coles Hill, none of the occurrences identified to date are presently considered economic deposits due to low grade and/or limited extent."

– William L. Lassetter, Jr., Economic Geology Manager, Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy, Division of Geology and Mineral Resources.

MYTH

"URANIUM MINING IN VIRGINIA WOULD BE THE FIRST TO TAKE PLACE EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI." "HISTORICALLY, URANIUM HAS BEEN MINED IN DRY, ARID CLIMATES."

– *Kay Slaughter, Southern Environmental Law Center video, You Tube*

FACT

Contrary to this mantra from uranium opponents, the facts are that uranium recovery has occurred in Florida, Louisiana, and Elliot Lake (in Ontario, now a thriving recreational and retirement community) – all east of the Mississippi. Other semi-arid and even wet climates have hosted uranium mining in Australia, Canada, Texas, and South Africa.

MYTH

DUE TO URANIUM'S VOLATILE MARKET PRICE, "THE COMPANY MAY SUSPEND OPERATIONS FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME OR EVEN GO OUT OF BUSINESS ALTOGETHER, PUTTING PEOPLE OUT OF WORK AND A COMMUNITY LEFT TO CLEAN UP THE MESS."

– Keep the Ban Economic Fact Sheet, 2011

FACT

It is standard practice for mining companies to sign long-term selling contracts which last up to twenty years. Such contracts secure the price of uranium for an extended time period while providing long-term job stability for miners and predictable revenues for the communities in which they work. Moreover, no uranium-mining company can extract an ounce of ore before posting surety bonds sufficient to restore the land it will disturb; for example, Pinion Ridge in Colorado is setting aside \$11 million in bonds and Homestake Grants in New Mexico \$33 million.

MYTH

"URANIUM MINING CAN LEAD TO RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINATION OF AIR AND GROUND WATER, CAUSING CANCER AND BIRTH DEFECTS."

– Virginia League of Conservation Voters Press Release on Congressman Robert Hurt campaign ads, October 13, 2010

FACT

Seven mines operated on the Arizona Strip, an area north of the Grand Canyon known for its high-grade uranium ore, between 1980 and 1991, producing more than 19 million pounds of uranium without any recorded damage to the environment, wildlife or the health of workers and neighboring communities."

– Dr. Madan Singh, director of the Arizona Department of Mines and Mineral Resources, Associated Press reports, April 2010

MYTH

"THERE WILL BE A DEAD ZONE WITHIN A 30 MILE RADIUS OF THE MINE. NOTHING WILL GROW. ANIMALS WILL DIE. THE RADIATION GENETICALLY ALTERS TISSUE. ANIMALS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO REPRODUCE. WE'LL SEE MALFORMED FETUSES."

– Jack Dunavant, Southside Concerned Citizens

FACT

"The proposed mining endeavors can be carried out with minimal impact on the environmental quality of the surrounding areas while simultaneously stimulating the economy of Southside Virginia, filling a vacancy in our country's energy needs, and reducing the United State's dependency on foreign sources of energy."

– Carter Ficklen, President of the Virginia Health Physics Society

MYTH

DRINKING WATER FOR VIRGINIA AND NORTH CAROLINA WOULD BE AT RISK. THE PROPOSED SITE IN PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY IS UPSTREAM FROM LAKE GASTON, THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF DRINKING WATER FOR VIRGINIA BEACH AND COMMUNITIES IN NORTH CAROLINA.

FACT

Based on NRC, EPA and other regulatory standards and the characteristics of the Coles Hill site, the probability of a tailings release from the Coles Hill site is effectively zero, or 1-in-10,000,000.

– (Kleinfelder, May 2011)