



## **Oral presentation**

**Written submission from  
Chelsea Iron, Darlene Gazandlare  
and Brenda McDonald**

In the Matter of the

**Cameco Corporation, McArthur River  
Operation and Key Lake Operation**

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Application for the renewal of uranium  
mine/mill licences for McArthur River  
Operation and Key Lake Operation

**Commission Public Hearing**

**June 7-8, 2023**

## **Exposé oral**

**Mémoire de  
Chelsea Iron, Darlene Gazandlare et  
Brenda McDonald**

À l'égard de

**Cameco Corporation, établissements de  
McArthur River et de Key Lake**

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Demande visant le renouvellement des permis  
d'exploitation de mines et d'usines de  
concentration d'uranium pour les  
établissements de McArthur River et de  
Key Lake

**Audience publique de la Commission**

**7-8 juin 2023**

April 24, 2023

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Senior Tribunal Officer, Commission Registry  
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission  
280 Slater Street  
Ottawa, Ontario

Email: [interventions@cnsccsn.gc.ca](mailto:interventions@cnsccsn.gc.ca)

Dear Senior Tribunal Officer,

Tansi, Chelsea Iron nisikasoon.

I am a young Indigenous woman. I grew up in a big family and am a mother to two wonderful boys. I was born and raised in the community that I love, and I want that for my children as well. I want them to know their culture and be able to practice a traditional lifestyle. I believe this is possible because of the opportunity in my community to work for industry.

I am joined today with my colleagues Brenda McDonald, a Métis and Treaty woman from the English River First Nation and Darlene Gazandlare, a Dene woman from the Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation in the Athabasca Basin.

We are proud Indigenous women who live in our home communities and practice a traditional lifestyle while working with industry. I have heard Brenda and Darlene speak about many aspects of their cultural heritage; beading, sewing, cooking, fishing and gathering both food and medicine to share with friends and family. I have been square dancing since I was 13 and I enjoy participating in many aspects of a traditional life. I want to teach my children in our traditional ways of life, while being respectful and successful.

I am part of the Kineepik Métis Local #9, located in the Northern Village of Pinehouse, which is within the mapped traditional territory of our Indigenous people. We use these lands surrounding the Missinippi (Churchill River) watershed for gathering food, shelter, and material supplies, which we have done for generations.

I am so proud of my community of Pinehouse Lake. The community is transforming into a thriving, self-sustaining Indigenous community. Being the nearest community south of the uranium mining operations, I have seen our leadership work with industry for many years. We formalized our partnership with the signing of a collaboration agreement in 2012. This is a common story, the English River First Nation and the Athabasca Basin communities also signed agreements with Cameco in 2013 and 2016 respectively formalizing their partnerships.

Exploration in our traditional territory started in 60s for Rabbit Lake and the 70s for Key Lake and McArthur River. Rabbit Lake mine started in the 70s and McArthur River and Key Lake a decade later.

I started with Cameco in 2021 during the pandemic as the community liaison, similar to Brenda. Darlene has been in her role for 10 years. Cameco and my community, northern Saskatchewan communities, have a 35-year relationship.

Before coming to Cameco, I have had other community-based roles, I am passionate about helping my community's growth much like my colleagues. In my current role, I assist with the implementation of the collaboration agreement. My focus is workforce development and community engagement and environmental stewardship initiatives. I have seen Cameco's support for our community initiatives, like our annual Elder's Gathering which is celebrating over 20 years. This is part of our community's culture and language priorities.

One of the benefits to our community under the agreement is employment, education and training. There is a growing need for employment and training in my community. When I started, I immediately got to work on a project in my community where free online courses were being provided by Cameco for members to upgrade their skills for future opportunities. I really liked this initiative. It was great to see there was a focus on attracting women and not just men. This past year, those that took the courses could apply for a work experience position. There was a commitment in 2022 and again in 2023 to see at least half of those placements go to women and I am proud to say that I was part of making that happen.

There is a perception that the jobs at the mines are for men but there is a place for women in the industry and I see Cameco striving for diversity in the mines. In this day and age, women can be employed in different aspects of mining; mechanics, heavy equipment operators, warehouse workers, our women can do it and are doing it.

Also, mentorship is a big piece of the puzzle. I have been informally mentored by women in the industry and in my community. I have seen Indigenous women from my community in leadership roles and within Cameco. I see myself as a role model for the next generation, for young Indigenous women.

Our friends and family are employed with industry. Brenda's husband has been in the industry for over 30 years, Darlene's son works for industry and my brother was with Cameco for almost 15 years and my father was recently hired on.

We are all role models in our communities. We want to encourage the youth to finish school and pursue opportunities in the mines or elsewhere. There is a growing capacity in my community and other northern communities to increase our workforce in many areas including professional, skills and trade. I want to be part of that growth, to help build the future for Pinehouse Lake.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of Cameco's renewal application for the Rabbit Lake, McArthur River and Key Lake mine licences.

Tiniki,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chelsea Iron". The letters are connected and written in a cursive style.

Chelsea Iron

cc Brenda McDonald  
Darlene Gazandlare