



**Written submission from the  
Athabasca Joint Engagement and  
Environmental Subcommittee**

**Mémoire de l’Athabasca Joint  
Engagement and Environmental  
Subcommittee**

In the Matter of the

À l’égard de

**Cameco Corporation,  
Cigar Lake Operation**

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**Cameco Corporation,  
établissement de Cigar Lake**

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Application for the renewal of Cameco’s  
uranium mine licence for the Cigar Lake  
Operation

Demande de renouvellement du permis de mine  
d’uranium de Cameco pour l’établissement de  
Cigar Lake

**Commission Public Hearing**

**Audience publique de la Commission**

**April 28-29, 2021**

**28 et 29 avril 2021**

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March 19, 2020

Jerilynn Benonie  
General Delivery  
Wollaston Lake, SK S0J 3C0

Senior Tribunal Officer, Secretariat  
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission  
280 Slater St.  
P.O. Box 1046, Station B  
Ottawa ON K1P 5S9

Senior Tribunal Officer:

On behalf of the Athabasca Joint Engagement and Environmental Subcommittee (AJES), I am pleased to provide a letter regarding the renewal application for Cameco's uranium mine licence for the Cigar Lake Operation.

The seven Athabasca Basin communities (including the Denesuline First Nations of Black Lake, Fond du Lac and Hatchet Lake, along with the communities of Stony Rapids, Wollaston Lake, Uranium City and Camsell Portage) signed the Ya'thi Nene Collaboration Agreement<sup>1</sup> (CA) in 2016 with Cameco and Orano. The agreement confirms the partnership between the communities and industry in development of the uranium resources in the Athabasca Basin. The agreement also builds on an impact management agreement signed in 1999, and is structured on five pillars of workforce development, business development, community investment, and community engagement and environmental stewardship.

The 2020 CA report to the community, based on 2019 progress, outlined the great work being done by all those involved under the agreement and noted \$62.2 million was provided for business development, community investment and workforce development to the Basin communities.

In addition, under the agreement the AJES were created and appointed as the primary liaisons between industry and the Athabasca First Nations and Athabasca communities for the sharing of environmental monitoring and other environmental information and act as the first point of contact with respect to community engagement matters.

Cameco maintained an established relationship with the Athabasca communities prior to the CA under the Impact Management Agreement signed in 1999. For over three decades, Cameco has engaged with Athabasca residents through subcommittees such as the Athabasca Working Group, the Environmental Quality Committee and through direct communication with community members (youth, Elders and land and resource users) and leadership.

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<sup>1</sup> The Parties to the Ya'thi Nene Collaboration Agreement are Cameco Corporation, Orano Canada Inc., Black Lake First Nation, Hatchet Lake First Nation, Fond du Lac First Nation, the community of Stony Rapids, the community of Uranium City, the community of Camsell Portage, and the community of Wollaston Lake.

The AJES meets at a minimum of four times per year and consists of the following members:

- 1 representative from Cameco
- 1 representative from Orano
- 1 representative from the Athabasca First Nation of Black Lake
- 1 representative from the Athabasca First Nation of Hatchet Lake
- 1 representative from the Athabasca First Nation of Fond du Lac
- 1 representative for the Athabasca municipalities (Uranium City, Camsell Portage, Stony Rapids, Wollaston Lake)

The Ya'thi Néné Lands and Resource Office was also created at the time of the Agreement for the benefit of the Athabasca Basin communities. This office has a broad mandate, which also includes the promotion and enhancement of the environmental health of the Athabasca Region. As this important environmental mandate is congruent with the AJES, one of the other members on the AJES is:

- The Executive Director of the Ya'thi Néné Lands and Resource Office

Community members are encouraged to bring forward any questions or concerns about the operations and the environment to their community AJES representatives. The AJES members will then raise the question during the quarterly meetings so that it can be addressed by the company representatives. As the local experts, the community AJES representatives also play an important role for the companies by providing advice, based on interest and need, regarding community engagement strategies for planned and future site-based projects.

A key role of the AJES is to review the Community-Based Environmental Monitoring Program (CBEMP). This independent monitoring program was formerly known as the Athabasca Working Group (AWG) environmental monitoring program, which conducted monitoring throughout the Athabasca Basin. The AWG program has been a big success, and since its initiation in 2000, routinely demonstrated that samples collected near the Athabasca communities are not influenced by the active uranium mining and milling operations in the region.

The CBEMP focuses on a single community area per year to conduct a dietary food survey and associated monitoring. Initiated in 2018, the CBEMP has been successfully completed in Stony Rapids, Black Lake and Fond du Lac, with results presented to leadership and community members. Traditional lifestyle is important to members and through this program, the community has the comfort that country foods remain safe.

Also recognized by the AJES is the Eastern Athabasca Regional Monitoring Program (EARMP). AJES is aware that the EARMP monitoring work is partially funded by the CNSC and is in full support of the program. The AJES works to ensure information is shared regarding areas of interest that have specifically been identified by community members.

In summary, the AJES is a single, joint forum for the companies and community members to share information on matters related to the environment, the operations, proposed authorizations, and to

address issues raised by the communities. The single forum ensures that adequate operational and regulatory updates are reaching the Athabasca Basin communities ensuring community members are adequately informed and that community members' concerns are heard during engagement opportunities with the companies.

The AJES supports the renewal application for Cameco's uranium mine licence for the Cigar Lake Operation. We have been well informed about the operation: Cigar Lake successfully transitioned through commissioning to full production during the current licence term. Cameco has taken proactive measures during the current COVID-19 pandemic to ensure safety of workers and communities and we feel, the programs, processes and people are in place to ensure continued safe production throughout the next licence term.

Sincerely,

*Jerilynn Benonie*

Jerilyn Benonie, AJES - Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation

cc.     Georgie McDonald AJES - Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation  
          John Toutsaint, AJES - Black Lake Denesuline First Nation  
          Victor Fern, AJES – Athabasca Municipalities (Interim)  
          Garrett Schmidt, AJES - Ya'thi Néné Lands and Resource Office  
          Glenn Lafleur, AJES – Orano  
          Kristin Cuddington, AJES - Cameco