

Pact with the Nuclear Devil: Saskatchewan's Uranium Companies Derogate Metis Land Rights

Interview with Activist Dale Smith. Global Research News Hour Episode 43

By [Michael Welch](#)

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Region: [Canada](#)

Theme: [Environment](#), [GLOBAL RESEARCH NEWS HOUR](#)

In-depth Report: [Depleted Uranium](#)

"So here to us was an immediate gag order... How come if I'm in opposition to the mining companies that this negotiation would rob me the ability to speak out my concerns to the leadership or to my own people, my own community, and my own municipality." Dale Smith

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Dale Smith is a Métis resident of Pinehouse, a community in the Boreal forest 500 kilometres north of Saskatoon in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan. Pinehouse is one of those Northern Saskatchewan communities targeted by the nuclear industry for its proximity to uranium deposits and to a site for the dumping of nuclear waste from Ontario.

In the fall of 2012, news of a Collaboration Agreement between the community of Pinehouse and uranium companies Cameco and Pinehouse began to surface. Community members like Smith became outraged not only by the lack of meaningful consultation, but by the terms of the agreement.

Confidentiality Clause

A summary of the Collaboration Agreement Term Sheet became available to community members at a November 13, 2012 public village meeting. The text directly implies that the village residents would effectively be subjected to a gag order:

Summary of the Collaboration Agreement Term Sheet Made Among Cameco Corporation, Areva Resources Canada Inc. and Pinehouse ("Term Sheet")
October 12, 2012

Section G: Other Promises

Pinehouse Promises to:

(a) Generally cooperate with Cameco/Areva and generally support Cameco/Areva operations when it deals with the provincial or federal governments although Pinehouse can raise concerns to the governments about the projects.

....

(e) Not make statements or say things in public or to any government, business or agency that opposes Cameco/Areva's mining operations.

(f) Make reasonable efforts to ensure Pinehouse members do not say or do anything that interferes with or delays Cameco/Areva's mining, or do or say anything that is not consistent with Pinehouse's promises under the Collaboration Agreement. [1]

Outrage from the community and negative media exposure resulted in the wording of the text being altered to omit the gag order provisions. However, in the final draft it became apparent that another signatory, Kineepik Métis Local Inc., representing Métis peoples in the town, had obtained records dealing with traditional land use mapping fishing, trapping and other resource utilization in the area. [2]

The executive, it seems, had agreed to share this information with Cameco/Areva so that compensation for lands encroached upon by the nuclear giants could be negotiated. In exchange, Pinehouse Village Trust would receive an initial payment of \$1 million with additional payments pending as new mining projects initiate operation.[3][4]

The final Collaboration Agreement between Pinehouse, Cameco and Areva was signed December 12, 2012.

In Dale Smith's words: "They bought Pinehouse outright."

On June 24, 2013, Larry Kowalchuk of Kowalchuk Law Office in Regina registered a statement of claim in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan's Court of Queen's Bench on behalf of Smith and two other litigants backed by three dozen other plaintiffs across Canada.

The suit argued the mining operations fostered by the Collaboration Agreement would have a detrimental impact on human health and the environment. The suit also named the Saskatchewan and Canadian governments as not protecting Aboriginal and Treaty rights enshrined under the Canadian Constitution, the Charter of Rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. [5]

The legal battle is a difficult one for Smith. Not only is he at the centre of a classic David and Goliath duel, but he finds himself pitted against friends and family within his village with few of his loved ones willing to take to the public stage alongside him.

This week's Global Research News Hour gives space for this humble wild rice harvester and fisherman turned defender of the land to tell his story.

For more information on this story visit the [Committee for Future Generations Website](#) or D'Arcy Hande's latest contribution to Briarpatch magazine – "[Courting collaboration: How the uranium industry bought the Village of Pinehouse, and what residents are doing to take it back](#)"

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Notes

- 1) <http://committeeoffuturegenerations.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/collaborationagreement.pdf>
- 2) D'Arcy Hande, Nov. 1, 2013; "Courting collaboration: How the uranium industry bought the Village of Pinehouse, and what residents are doing to take it back", Briarpatch Magazine; <http://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/courting-collaboration>
- 3) *ibid*
- 4) [Collaboration Agreement between the Northern Village of Pinehouse and Kineepik Metis local Inc and Camco Corporation and Areva Resources Canada Inc, December 12 2012,](#)
- 5) D'Arcy Hande, *op cit*.

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The Global Research News Hour is also broadcast on [CHLY 101.7fm](#) in Nanaimo, B.C every Thursday at 1pm PST!

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