

Students present petition urging ban on uranium mining

By Chris Fox

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Progressive Conservative Leader David Alward is again calling for a ban on uranium mining in the province, and this time he's being joined by 597 students.

Alward, whose party has raised the issue of uranium mining in the legislature on three previous occasions, accepted a petition Thursday morning calling for the ban. The petition was signed by students across the province and was presented by a group of four Fredericton High School students.

Alward then presented it in the legislature.

"We hope that the government is beginning to get the message from the people of New Brunswick that they don't believe the risk associated to public health is worth taking a chance on," he said.

"It was excellent to see young people today who have taken the time to come and taken the time to raise the issue with other young people across the province, and it certainly shows how committed people are to this."

Uranium exploration and mining is allowed in New Brunswick as long as it isn't in watersheds, well fields, villages, towns, cities or within 300 meters of a residential property. Alward said it needs to be banned outright, as has been done in three provinces.

"There needs to be a clear message of no exploration or mining of uranium in New Brunswick," he said.

Patrick Thibeault is with the New Brunswick Environmental Network and helped to oversee the collection of signatures for the petition. He said his group's message was clear.

"I would like to see what we are actually asking for, which is a permanent ban on uranium mining and exploration in the province," he said. "It is all about health. The negative effects of uranium mines or uranium exploration on the environment and on human health are huge."