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PRESS RELEASE

Saskatchewan Environmental Society

Monday, March 2, 2026

For immediate release

Saskatchewan Environmental Society opposes new \$2.6-billion uranium deal with India amid ongoing refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

The Saskatchewan Environmental Society (SES) today is raising strong concerns following the newly signed agreement that will see Saskatchewan-mined uranium — valued at \$2.6 billion over nine years — sold to India for use in its expanding nuclear fleet. Despite India's growing atomic weapons program and refusal to sign key international nuclear treaties, the governments of Saskatchewan and Canada are moving forward with a major expansion of uranium trade.

"India refuses to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was intended to be a prerequisite for all uranium and nuclear reactor trade between countries," says SES board member Peter Prebble. "Selling uranium to a country that rejects the Treaty — and that in fact openly defies it — is highly irresponsible. India has also refused to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, designed to prevent nuclear weapons testing."

While 190 countries have ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, India remains one of a handful of nations that have not. A total of 178 countries have ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

India used Canadian nuclear reactor technology to develop and test its first atomic bomb in 1974, prompting a temporary halt to uranium sales. Despite this history, and at the urging of the Saskatchewan government, Canada signed a Nuclear Co-operation Agreement with India in 2012 and resumed uranium exports shortly afterward. Saskatchewan-mined uranium, primarily supplied by Cameco, has been the source.

The 2012 Agreement stipulates that Canadian uranium must be used only for peaceful purposes. However, it has become clear that the Agreement is not preventing India from expanding its nuclear weapons arsenal.

"Since the Agreement was signed, India has almost doubled its nuclear weapons arsenal and now has at least 170 nuclear warheads," Prebble notes. "While Saskatchewan uranium fuels India's civilian nuclear reactors, this Agreement and the newly announced trade deal effectively frees India to use its limited domestic uranium stockpiles for atomic weapons production."



SES argues that India's actions violate core principles of safe nuclear trade. Yet Saskatchewan and Canada continue to position India as a preferred uranium customer.

"Canada and Saskatchewan are setting a troubling precedent for the rest of the world by signaling that compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty and acceptance of comprehensive international inspections on nuclear facilities are not necessary to secure uranium trade," says Prebble.

SES also raises concern about India's growing stockpile of so-called civilian plutonium that has been separated from spent nuclear reactor fuel. Although ostensibly designated for future electricity generation, this plutonium could be converted into atomic weapons material within one to two years. Because India has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, preventing such a shift would be extremely difficult. Moreover, India can also withdraw from its Nuclear Co-operation Agreement with Canada with just one year's notice.

India now has sufficient plutonium to expand its nuclear weapons arsenal by well over 100 warheads. Prebble adds that "once created, plutonium remains usable for nuclear weapons purposes for thousands of years."

The Saskatchewan Environmental Society does not object to expanding non-nuclear trade with India. However, proceeding with a \$2.6-billion uranium deal with a government unwilling to sign The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is unwise. Canada should be strengthening the enforcement of the Treaty, not undermining it.

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Saskatchewan Environmental Society (SES) is a non-profit, registered charity that is committed to supporting sustainable living and sustainable resource use in Saskatchewan. We work with, and on behalf of, communities, organizations, businesses, and policy makers to encourage informed decision-making that moves us towards sustainability. SES's current action areas include sustainable energy and climate solutions, water protection, resource conservation, biodiversity preservation, and reduction of toxic substances. Our work in Saskatchewan is carried out in Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, and our office is in Saskatoon on Treaty 6, the traditional territory of Cree Peoples and the homeland of the Métis Nation.