



CAMECO

(2006 - Present)

Public affairs, public relations, issues management, stakeholder relations



Low-level radiation is an issue in Port Hope for more than 30 years, dating back to Eldorado Nuclear and inherited by Cameco, the world's largest uranium producer, when it took over Eldorado Nuclear's uranium conversion facilities in Port Hope.

In 2004, a heated community debate began over Cameco's plan to produce slightly enriched uranium at its Port Hope facility. Opposition from a local group in Port Hope forced Cameco to stop the introduction of the new process even though it would have benefited the community and was scientifically sound.

In 2006, Cameco retained Enterprise Canada. We developed a **Community Liaison Forum** model that differed from the usual committee approach to public consultation which has a number of drawbacks:

- It often becomes an exhaustion strategy in which a committee of opponents meets to Committees are formed to review issues but decisions never get made, and on for years until the players change and no one cares. Because it is a consultant driven strategy, it provides no incentive to end the process;
- The process is virtually invisible to the public
- Net effect is damaging to the company and to the community in which it operates. The company is forced to cede control and write a blank cheque for never-ending process. In the end, the community's legitimate questions are never answered and the company's reputation suffers.

Enterprise Canada was retained to open a dialogue and build trust with community residents, stakeholders and private interest groups concerned about low-level radiation and its impact on health.

Our Approach

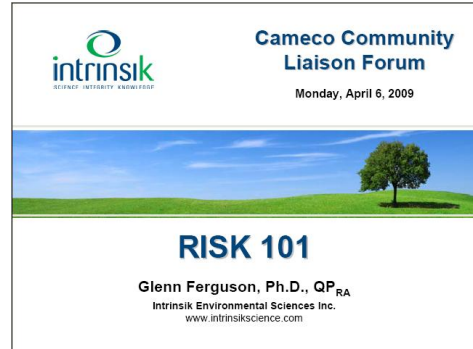
We developed a model for a Community Liaison Forum which:

- Was broad-based and brought all groups – opponents, supporters, neutral – together to discuss the issues;
- Got individuals involved. We drew up lists of individuals from each group, invited them to participate and followed up with phone calls to ensure attendance;





- Provided context for discussion in the form of in-depth briefings to ensure people begin discussion from same base of knowledge;
- Brought third-party experts in and gave people the opportunity to ask whatever questions they want in an open and public forum to ensure that people who might have wanted to play fast and loose with the facts were not able to do so;
- Use a mix of round-table discussions facilitated by professionals to ensure a full and balanced discussion and that a full set of views had been aired. We also appointed a spokesperson at each table to report back to the room to ensure the room heard the outcome of discussions at other tables and determine whether there is a consensus in the room;
- Reported the discussions to the community at large using the Internet, newsletters, and advertising.



At the conclusion of each meeting, the room was asked to prioritize an action list which the company committed to implement for the next forum.

Results

- To date, 14 Community Liaison Forums have been held by Cameco in Port Hope and the process continues.
- As a result of Cameco's successful shift in its strategic approach to community outreach, public support for Cameco in Port Hope has risen to 83 per cent (June, 2007) from a low of 66 per cent in January 2005. Public support continues in the 80 per cent range despite well-publicized leaks that have resulted in the temporary closure of the conversion facility.
- The Community Liaison Forums have become an integral part of Cameco's community outreach initiative with one resident saying at a recent forum that "Port Hope is a much nicer place to live since the forums began."

