

Legislative Priority # 1: The City of Norfolk strongly opposes the elimination of the existing legislative moratorium on uranium mining in Virginia. (Council Priorities: *Economic Vitality and Workforce Development; Environmental Sustainability; and Safe, Healthy and Inclusive Community*).

Virginia Uranium, Inc. has proposed to conduct mining of uranium deposits on its Coles Hill property in Pittsylvania County, Virginia. Before any mining can occur, the Commonwealth must lift a statutory moratorium on uranium mining that has been in effect statewide for several decades. Virginia Uranium pursued an aggressive legislation initiative during the 2013 General Assembly, which was ultimately withdrawn by its primary patron to avoid a record of General Assembly defeat. It continues to pursue intensive grassroots and legislative efforts to lift the existing statutory moratorium.

Norfolk's opposition to the lifting of the moratorium on uranium mining in Virginia is predicated on the city's informed conclusion that the existing environmental and public health regulatory structure for traditional mining operations in the Commonwealth is fundamentally flawed.

To be effective, this new regulatory framework will be extremely complicated, as compared to Virginia's current mining regulatory structure. Uranium is found in the ground in nature but when exposed to air and water during the mining process, radiation is released into the environment. Uranium mining is a completely new and unfamiliar mining industry to the Commonwealth and has only been mined in remote, arid areas. Further, there is no evidence to suggest conclusively that mining uranium in a wet climate can be done safely.

The venue for testing a new experimental regulatory structure and new uranium mining technology in a precipitous climate like Virginia should not occur when the consequences of error would be catastrophic to such a vital and important water supply serving more than 1 million people in Southside Virginia as well as the world's largest naval base.