



## NEWS RELEASE

### **BC's mineral exploration sector responds to provincial position on uranium and thorium**

**Vancouver, BC – March 23, 2009** – British Columbia's mineral exploration community today expressed disappointment with the provincial government's new regulatory decision to not allow permits to explore for uranium and thorium in British Columbia, with the resulting loss in economic diversification and investment opportunities.

"Modern Canadian mineral exploration and mining activities are safe and must protect the surrounding environment," said Gavin C. Dirom, President & CEO of the Association for Mineral Exploration British Columbia (AME BC). "To place a retroactive ban on a specific commodity denies the validity of science and a proper environmental assessment and community consultation process," said Dirom.

At present, British Columbia has an extremely stringent environmental assessment process. Although there are over 12,000 mineral occurrences in BC, there are fewer than 20 major coal and metal mines using a tiny fraction of BC's land base to generate significant wealth for all the citizens of this province. A mine is rare and valuable, and the reality is that the likelihood of an exploration project becoming an operating mine is very low. Currently, uranium mines are safely operating in over 20 countries around the world. In fact, Canada is the world's largest exporter of uranium and has the most stringent regulations and safeguards on its use. Uranium and thorium have many positive and beneficial uses, principally in the energy sector and in critical health care applications.

According to the Canada Nuclear Safety Commission uranium mine workers have the lowest injury rates in the Canadian mining industry and modern workers are no less healthy than the average Canadian citizen.

"Valuable natural mineral resources, such as uranium and thorium, are the common heritage of all British Columbians. Knowing more about what those resources are allows citizens to make informed and educated choices about which resources to use, how and when. As geoscientists, we know that uranium and thorium are safely explored for and used around the world, and we look forward to working closely with the provincial government to help inform the public about the natural properties of these elements and how best to manage them" concluded Dirom.

BC's world-class mineral exploration and mining sector will continue to dialogue with the public, industry and governments in Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nunavut, Australia, and others around the world to help build a safe, prosperous and beneficial global uranium and thorium industry that will create jobs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ensure energy self-sufficiency.

#### **About AME BC:**

AME BC represents more than 5,000 members including geoscientists, prospectors, engineers, entrepreneurs, exploration companies, suppliers, mineral producers, and associations who are engaged in mineral exploration in BC and throughout the world. Through leadership, partnerships, and advocacy, AME BC promotes a healthy environment and business climate for the mineral exploration industry. AME BC is the predominant voice of mineral exploration in British Columbia.

-end-

For more information, please contact Byng Giraud, Senior Director, Policy and Communications, AME BC, at 778.233.6449 or [byng@amebc.ca](mailto:byng@amebc.ca).