

This letter is in reference to the article, "Uranium group addresses conflicts of interests." Yes, I'm concerned about the taint of conflict of interest on the National Academies of Science panel in the presence of a uranium industry manager – but the important thing to keep in mind is that the NAS is not producing a "study" based on original research and reaching a conclusion about whether uranium mining can be done safely in Virginia. Rather, the panel will produce a report, a summary of existing literature on the science, technology and regulatory framework. It will be up to the General Assembly to make the final call about lifting the statewide ban or not.

In addition, there are three studies underway that need to be reviewed and vetted by the legislators and the public: an economic study requested by the state, a study on local economic impact being done by the Danville Regional Foundation, and a study by Virginia Beach on the impact of uranium mining on its drinking water supply.

The General Assembly is charged with safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of Virginians. That's what we elected them to do. There could be no greater conflict of interest than if they allow the industry to steamroll legislation through the 2012 session to lift the ban.

Ms. Bozick's article is an important one, but the Richmond Times Dispatch should not stop there. I encourage the RTD to dig deep into this story and share with its readers the truth behind this renewed push for uranium in Virginia.