

Panel discussion: Mining, NORM, and the Circular Economy

- We see a shortage of many materials, sand, wood, etc. due to depletion of resources & strained supply chains
- We know the environmental damage caused by producing bulk materials.
- We should use every opportunity to save natural resources and re-use what we would have despised as waste in times of abundance
- As experts, society looks up to us and trusts us. Who else would be able to assess the real risks of using or re-using NORM?
- After all, most doses caused by NORM are in the range of natural background.
- Our assessment of low-dose radiation impacts is based on (reasonable) assumptions and conventions, such as LNT.
- Yet as experts we are carried away by searching for the last tiny Becquerel in yet another material
- We build remote risk scenarios over ungraspable time horizons, only to find doses that are within the natural dose range.

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- Shipment of mineral concentrates may be denied at ports.
- We adopt „zero tolerance“ towards natural radioactivity in goods.
- We use terminology and language that puts natural radioactivity close to nuclear applications.
- Thus, industry, which is the basis of our welfare, is actively discouraged from using NORM by regulatory red-tape and a public made hysteric with all sorts of perceived risks.
- As experts, are we really doing society a service, or are we hampering sustainability by instilling unfounded fear of the public who trusts us?
- We simply cannot afford wasting resources and materials that can be used safely and make life unnecessarily difficult for industry just because it contains some elevated natural radioactivity.
- Rules of the road need to be observed.
- However, would it not be time to widen the road for NORM and remove all the road warning signs where there is no danger at all?