



Alternatives North

April 28, 2014

Honourable Bernard Valcourt
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
10 Wellington Street
Gatineau QC K1A 0H4

Minister Valcourt

Re: Water and Land Use Inspections at the Giant Mine, Yellowknife, NWT

We understand that the Giant Mine site remains the responsibility of the federal government post devolution, including water and land use inspections. It is also our understanding that Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) has no inspection staff in the Northwest Territories and that the Giant Mine will be inspected by a staff person based in Iqaluit, Nunavut. If our understandings are correct, we are very concerned that the inspector for Giant Mine is now located over 2,300 km away. That person would require no less than a day to travel to Yellowknife in the case of an emergency or even for a regular inspection at Giant Mine.

Over 770 bags of arsenic contaminated materials are now stored on the surface on wooden pallets and under tarps rather than in the planned for and more secure sea-cans used for temporary storage of other bags at the site. This situation is to continue for an unknown period of time. Within the past three years there has been a massive underground failure, in the order of a half million cubic feet of rock we were told, that was completely unanticipated and has required constant attention since by your staff and contractors to make the situation safer. In two of the last three years, there have been unanticipated spills or discharges of materials into Baker Creek that flows through the site.

With the spring melt and freshet just around the corner here in Yellowknife, we question how an inspector located in Iqaluit can effectively carry out inspections that are supposed to protect public safety and the environment. It may be time to consider designating or delegating the inspection authority over Giant Mine to another competent agency such as Environment Canada or the Government of the NWT.

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We look forward to your timely reply and to seeing an effective inspection regime put in place for the Giant Mine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin O'Reilly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kevin O'Reilly
Giant Mine Coordinator
Alternatives North

- cc. Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, GNWT
- Chiefs Edward Sangris and Ernest Betsina, Yellowknives Dene First Nation
- Bill Enge, President, North Slave Metis Alliance
- Mayor Mark Heyck, City of Yellowknife
- Yellowknife Members of the Legislative Assembly of the NWT
- Dennis Bevington, Member of Parliament for the Western Arctic
- Joanne Deneron, Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
- Willard Hagen, Chairperson, Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board
- Joanna Ankersmit, Contaminated Site Program, AANDC