



# Yellowknives Dene First Nation

P.O. Box 2514, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P8

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Bernard Valcourt  
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada  
14 Costigan Street  
Edmunston, New Brunswick E3V 1W9  
Fax: (506) 739-4607  
[Bernard.Valcourt@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Bernard.Valcourt@parl.gc.ca)

Gail Shea  
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans  
250 Water Street, Suite F (Main Office)  
Summerside, PEI C1N 1B3  
Fax: (902) 432-6853  
[gail.shea@parl.gc.ca](mailto:gail.shea@parl.gc.ca)

Leona Aglukkaq  
Minister of Environment  
Building 208, P.O. Box 1930  
Iqaluit, Nunavut X0A 0H0  
Fax: (613) 996-9764  
[leona.aglukkaq@parl.gc.ca](mailto:leona.aglukkaq@parl.gc.ca)

Michael Miltenburger  
Environment and Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 1320  
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9  
[Michael\\_miltenberger@gov.nt.ca](mailto:Michael_miltenberger@gov.nt.ca)

Dear Ministers:

## **Re: Giant Mine Report of Environmental Assessment**

The Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN) has reviewed the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board's Report of Environmental Assessment for the Giant Mine Reclamation. We feel that the Measures and Suggestions found in the report have greatly improved the project as a whole, increasing the probability of a successful reclamation similar to those found in southern Canada.

YKDFN fully participated in this hearing and made our position clear to your staff – the project as it was initially envisioned was flawed. We accept that the project is about management and the frozen block represents the best short term management scenario. What was needed was appropriate steps to ensure that the project remains flexible, continues to look for permanent solutions, and creates mechanisms that will ensure successful implementation. Taken together, we feel that the project will not result in significant impacts or public concern.

This project has been in progress for more than a decade. YKDFN wrote to the Minister as far back as the 70s, seeking environmental action and impact management. The concerns of the First Nation extend much further back. Lastly, it was our children who were poisoned and died from the operation half a century ago. With the efforts of your staff, the involvement of YKDFN and the Parties, now we have a reclamation plan that works. The time to act is now.

We know that the Responsible Ministers are reviewing the decision and carefully considering the Recommendations. We know that there are people within your organizations that will want to excise portions of the decision. However, we ask that you keep the decision as is – it gives us all a good path forward and will provide a site that is of use to the people who live here. This path forward takes one of the greatest environmental disasters and creates conditions that will let us turn it into a site that provides great opportunity and benefit for future generations. This could be a model for successful reclamation projects – turning a failure into a success and providing new value to your citizens.

We ask you to quickly accept the report so that this project can get under way – that the long work of stabilizing this site can begin. Once this is complete, together we can look to close this unfortunate chapter and relegate it to history. As that happens we can begin to create a new story, where responsible environmental management doesn't allow new GIANTS to be created and we can look to development in our territory with confidence that the mistakes of the past have been corrected.

Sincerely,



Chief Edward Sangris  
Yellowknives Dene First Nation (Dettah)