

ml200728-0031



Yellowknives Dene First Nation
Box 2514, Yellowknife, N.T. X1A 2P8

March 17, 2008

Mayor Gordon Van Tighem
City of Yellowknife
P.O. Box 580
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
X1A 2N4

Dear Mayor Van Tighem:

RE: Giant Mine Remediation Project

As Chiefs of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN), it was with great concern that we have learned that the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board (MVLWB) ruled that an environmental assessment (EA) was not required for the Giant Mine remediation project's water license. The MVLWB decision put forward the opinion:

- "There is not a likelihood that the proposed development might have a significant adverse impact"
- "There is not a likelihood that the proposed development might be a cause of public concern"

As you are no doubt aware, YKDFN wrote to the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board to express our concerns with this project in which we expressed our opinions that the Giant Mine Reclamation Project does represent a significant concern and may have significant potential impacts. Notwithstanding general YKDFN support for the overall goals of the project, because of the magnitude and complexity of the project, the scrutiny provided by the EA is important. This would provide the City and the YKDFN with an open and independent process, providing a level of comfort to allow all parties to move forward with confidence.

Our concerns generally echo those raised by the City of Yellowknife council committee, including but not limited to: Issues of plan design, implementation, and oversight all being within the same department; the sheer magnitude and complexity of the project; the potential impacts should remediation plan not work as expected; determining whether the targeted remediation levels are appropriate; and lastly, the long term issues associated with what the YKDFN feels what is at best, a temporary solution to a long lasting problem.

If this reclamation plan is as well researched and prepared as some have said it is, when combined with an open and efficient process, then there is no reason that it needs to take years. Meanwhile, all of the stakeholders will have a voice. Historically, the Members of the YKDFN have been the group most adversely affected by this project, and the EA would ensure that these impacts are minimized as we move forward. Of course, this is not simply a YKDFN issue - If the site remediation is not undertaken properly then both the YKDFN and the City of Yellowknife could conceivably suffer severe consequences in the future.