



The Right Honourable Justin P. J. Trudeau, P.C., Q.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
LANGEVIN BLOCK
OTTAWA ON K1A 0A2

JAN 18 2018

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

NWT Legislative Assembly Motion – Apology and Compensation to the Yellowknives Dene First Nation Relating to Damages from the Giant Mine

I am writing to you today to convey a unanimously supported motion of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly. On October 20, 2017, the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories approved a motion, calling upon the Government of Canada to make a formal apology to the Yellowknives Dene First Nation for the damage done by Giant Mine and further, that the Government of Canada enter into negotiations with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation to provide compensation for these damages and loss. A copy of the motion is enclosed for your reference.

I encourage you to work with Chief Sangris and Chief Betsina to address this issue in the spirit of the renewed nation-to-nation relationship that your government has promoted.

Sincerely,

Robert R. McLeod
Premier

Attachment

c. Distribution List

Distribution List

Michael McLeod, M.P.
Northwest Territories

Gary Bohnet
Principal Secretary

Mike Aumond
Secretary to Cabinet/Deputy Minister
Executive and Indigenous Affairs

Chief Edward Sangris
Yellowknives Dene First Nation (Detah)

Chief Ernest Betsina
Yellowknives Dene First Nation (Ndıłq)

Motion

Apology and Compensation to the Yellowknives Dene First Nation Relating to Damages from the Giant Mine

WHEREAS the Yellowknives Dene First Nation have used and occupied the lands and waters around Yellowknife Bay for thousands of years and continue to do so;

AND WHEREAS the workings of the Giant Mine were located in their territory without consultation or permission from the Yellowknives Dene First Nation;

AND WHEREAS the operation of Giant Mine contaminated the lands and waters surrounding the site, to the extent that some traditional activities, including hunting, fishing and gathering by the Yellowknives Dene First Nation have been harmed, and potentially will never again be possible;

AND WHEREAS the massive stockpiles of arsenic created by the mine threaten to cause a major environmental catastrophe that could prevent Yellowknives Dene First Nation usage of its traditional lands and waters;

AND WHEREAS a treaty entitlement and land rights agreement has yet to be completed with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, and the impacts and damages created by Giant Mine are of an extraordinary and exceptional nature;

AND WHEREAS on July 1, 2017 the Prime Minister of Canada publicly stated that "Indigenous Peoples in this country have faced oppression for centuries. As a society, we must acknowledge and apologize for past wrongs, and chart a path forward for the next 150 years";

AND WHEREAS the Giant Mine Oversight Board in its 2017 Establishment Report recommended that in the interest of reconciliation, "the decisions and actions of past governments...are acknowledged, and an apology is made for the impacts that these decisions and actions have had on the Yellowknives Dene First Nation";



Date of Notice: October 18, 2017

Date of Introduction: October 20, 2017

Disposition: Carried RV

Carried: October 20, 2017

Moved by: Mr. Beaulieu

Seconded by: Mr. O'Reilly

Ruled Out of Order:

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Frame Lake, that this Legislative Assembly calls upon the Government of Canada to make a formal public apology for the damage done by the Giant Mine, and more specifically to the Yellowknives Dene First Nation;

AND FURTHER, that this Assembly calls upon the Government of Canada to enter into negotiations with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation to provide compensation for these damages and loss of use;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Premier of the Northwest Territories convey this motion without delay to the Prime Minister of Canada with a letter requesting a reply.



CANADA

PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

FEB 14 2018


Dear Premier:

Thank you for your letter of January 18, 2018, regarding the motion approved by the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly with respect to the Yellowknives Dene First Nation.

I appreciate that you have raised this important issue. Given her responsibilities for Indigenous and Northern issues, I am forwarding, for her consideration, a copy of our exchange of correspondence to Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to the Premier of the Northwest Territories.

The Honourable Robert R. McLeod
Premier of the Northwest Territories
P.O. Box 1320
Legislative Assembly Building
2nd Floor
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
X1A 2L9