

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
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14 October, 1980.

The Honourable Richard Nerysoo,  
Minister of Renewable Resources,  
Government of the Northwest Territories,  
YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T.  
X1A 2L9

Dear Mr. Minister:

Environmental assessment and review in response to resource development has been discussed by the Science Advisory Board on numerous occasions. The limited resources available to the Board have not permitted us to conduct a thorough study of the many facets of this complex subject. Nevertheless, we wish to advise you of several fundamental principles that in our opinion should be followed in the evolution of the environmental review process in the Northwest Territories. The attached statement by Dr. Solandt summarizes the Board's position.

Respectfully yours,



Ben Hubert,  
Executive Secretary.

Attachment

## Environmental Assessment

The Environmental Assessment Process involves the collection of all available knowledge concerning the impact on the environment of a proposed development and then balancing the perceived impact of any negative factors against the expected benefits.

In some cases this balance must be viewed in a national context and the Federal Environmental Assessment and Review Office is the appropriate agency. However, most developments have only regional or local impacts and so should be examined in a local or regional forum. Many of the judgements concerning perceived risks and advantages are mainly subjective and should be strongly influenced by those who are most likely to be affected. This means that the Ottawa dominated process is unsuitable for many of the projects in the Northwest Territories and should be replaced by a Territorially based mechanism.

The Science Advisory Board feels that wise decisions on environmental impact problems must be based on the best available facts. Many of these have a scientific basis and must be collected, analyzed and presented by the most competent and objective scientists available. Social and economic impact studies must be similarly prepared by people who thoroughly understand the local situation.

Therefore the environmental assessment mechanism that deals with developments whose major impact is within the Northwest Territories should be based and controlled in the Territories.

O. M. Solandt,  
18 September, 1980.



