

Alternatives North

4 February 2015

David Ramsay
Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment
Government of the Northwest Territories
Box 1320
Yellowknife NT

Dear Mr. Ramsay:

Re: Creation of NWT Mining Advisory Board

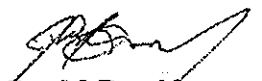
Alternatives North is writing to recommend a broader representation of interests for the new Northwest Territories Mining Advisory Board that was announced on January 28, 2015. The press release indicates that the Board's purpose is to "provide advice to government to ensure mining regulation is in place that encourages economic growth while maintaining high regulatory, environmental and social standards." This is a laudable goal. The press release also notes that the five to seven appointed members will have "direct experience in the NWT minerals industry."

If the Board is to meet its goal, its membership must reflect more perspectives than those of only the mining industry. To have those being regulated serve as the sole participants in such a Board invites challenges that it will be an echo chamber and inevitably will result in industry-minded advice that will not reflect the broad public interest. Alternatives North recommends the appointment of members from a variety of interests and backgrounds (including those with environmental and social determinants experience) as essential for such a Board to present advice on mining regulation that works for the people and the land of the NWT. Aboriginal government representation is also certainly a necessary part of the complement.

Multi-stakeholder boards or committees are not new to the NWT. They better reflect the complexity of both the issues at hand and our community. For example, the NWT Protected Areas Strategy Steering Committee includes the NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines, and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers.

In today's world, mining developments need an environmental and social license. A broader range of expertise and interests will make this Board's advice credible in the eyes of the public. The interests of all will be better served.

We look forward to your response.


Ben McDonald
For Alternatives North
cc. NWT MLAs

c.c Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure