

I don't know what time of day you are reviewing this submission but to begin with I would like to thank you for sitting on this committee and for taking the time to review or hear all of the presentations you receive.

I do not represent any group or business but I do feel that I speak for those in the northwest territories that do not have a voice -- the animals, the land, and the generations to come.

I do not pretend to be an expert, I'm not, but I do believe I am in tune with nature and an area of territorial growth that most people ignore while they pursue their business interests in earnest while the land and the planet cries out for help. These acts are history in the making as they pass from their long tenure in federal hands to the careful, we hope, control of the NWT government. Since they will establish mining and land use planning for the next many years, it is essential they are done with the right intent and in the best interests of all concerned. That is not just the mining sector but the land and the delicate ecosystem on which we live.

When I was in a local electronic store last week, I heard someone whose well known family who has been long involved in mining say, "I don't see much of a future for Yellowknife." The store clerk had to ask him to repeat his statement three times. I believe that what he said is true and in fact, if we continue down the path we are, there will not only be a shortened future for the NWT but for the planet, too. What I am saying, then, is that pursuing mining and extraction activity in the ways that we have been is not sustainable and if we continue down this path, there will be nothing left in a short time anyway. Climate change scientists are saying that we are already in what is termed planetary distress and in 11 short years, we will be heading into climate change disaster.

This is not alarmist thinking but reality. The earth can no longer tolerate the path the human species has been on for the last several decades and with the exploding world wide population she is saying loud and clear through her floods, her fires, her droughts, disease and famine, that she cannot cope anymore. Yet somehow, certain members of the human species bent on a colonial approach to existence seem to think that more mining, more development, more exploitation will save us. It won't. It will be our end.

This week, U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo made two frightening statements; that melting permafrost will be a boon for economic development and that Canada does not have a legitimate claim to the northwest passage. If this does not shiver your timbers, nothing will. As we all know, melting permafrost means the release of methane gas, the very gas that has now become the greatest threat to our environment and the same gas that almost flushed the people of Yellowknife out during the fires of 2014. The melting of permafrost, by the way, is also what resulted in the thawing of a 75 year old reindeer carcass in Siberia which released anthrax killing a nearby reindeer herd, a child and sending 12 others to hospital. In fact, Jean-Michel Claverie, a genomics researcher who studies ancient viruses and bacteria says that the thawing of permafrost in Russia which is already considered a global threat because of the viruses being released, says that one of the greatest dangers from the melts is that the thawing will encourage greater excavation in the Arctic. Mining and other excavation projects will become more appealing and these projects can put workers into contact with some very, very old and deadly bugs and virus sleeping under the hardened surface. (CNN July 28, 2016)

To add to this, scientists said this week that the permafrost is melting so quickly that they equipment they are using to measure its pace is disappearing with the shifting landscape.

This is the reality in which we live, yet reading through the Mineral Rights Act, it is quickly apparent that favoritism is still being given to mining companies while little protection and emphasis is being given to the land. Is this because the mining industry is in the government's

pocket or worse, that the government is in the pocket of the mining industry still even though we have seen the catastrophic affects of mining activities in the north.

It was of great concern to me that while attending a luncheon in February of this year where the minister of ITI spoke on the future of mining in the territories he called for a balanced approach, yet the only question that came from those in attendance was from someone from the mining sector who asked how quickly the territories could take control of water way protection from the federal government with the underlying suggestion that those regulations need to be relaxed. This is very concerning when we know that these are the people who have easy access to a minister who, it is proposed, will be given discretion over what complaints and investigation over land use will be pursued. These people still have a single point of view at a time when we need to be looking at diversification and sustainable development. Mining may have been the great exciting way of the past which drew the prospectors and developers and indeed, put the north on the map in an interesting way, but it cannot be the way of the future. It is simply not sustainable.

I would like to read to you something that came from the ITI's document titled "Sharing responsibility for managing Land and Natural Resources" quote, "This is why the proposed *Mineral Resources Act* is focused on things like getting benefits for NWT residents from mining, encouraging engagement, and effectively administering mineral exploration — not on things like environmental protection, mine clean-up, and wildlife management which are already managed through other means." In fact, when you read through the MRA, it quickly becomes clear that very little attention is given to protection of the land and animals, but rather that mining development is pursued in an orderly way that benefits the people of the northwest territories in a fair and balanced way and that indeed, mining will be the saving grace of the territories.

Let's not forget that mining left a Giant mess at the Colomac site. Let's never forget that. Let's also not forget that mining brings with it a host of other social, economic and health problems that are not covered in any act but that in fact, leave other departments and agencies scrambling to clean up the social mess from alcoholism, boom and bust cycles leading to bankruptcy, drugs, homelessness, vanishing species and, of course, environmental degradation. Let's not forget the less rosy side of the mining industry that we prefer not to address and that is not covered in this document.

And yet the territories still does not have a treatment center.

Please, do not get me wrong. I have been in the north during the gold rush and too was a recipient of the economic benefits, all the money I wanted, gold rings, gold earrings, gold everything so I know what the upside is like. But all that is gone and I'm good with that, because it is a) just stuff and b) I had no idea the toll it was taking on the first nations or on the land. It is the story behind the story...that is the one we need to pay attention to. How many knew that the first child victim from arsenic died in the 50s and that that child's parents received \$50. To compensate for their loss? How many knew about the build up of arsenic that we pay 350 million to keep buried? How many are aware of and have seen the huge pits active or non active in the diamond industry that have destroyed caribou migrating patterns and whose access roads have permanently altered the landscape of this beautiful land of ours?

I don't know about you but when I wake up in the morning, the first thing I want to see is not some big hunk of diamond on my finger or nightstand, it is the sound of a bird outside my window, the sunrise in the right season, the smell of clean air and the cawing of a raven. It is not the sound of equipment blowing up the land or the sight of petro discoloring the air. It is, at

night, the most spectacular light show anywhere in the world...the very thing that is bringing an increasing flow of tourists from around the world to see one of the most beautiful spots on this planet even though she, of all places, is being hit so hard by climate change. Do we truly appreciate what we have and are we willing to protect and enhance it?

When I was in Whitehorse last spring, I spent a great deal of time hanging out at the busiest tourist center I have seen anywhere. People from all over Canada and the States flock there to see the beauty of the land. Did you know that there are three flights a day from Germany to Whitehorse filled with people who just want to spend time on the land. Tourism is a great sustainable industry and one which teaches people to appreciate the nature all around us. It leads to great innovative projects designed to enhance and protect what is already there, not like mining which only seeks to exploit.

I also spent time in Inuvik and drove down the Dempster and was amazed at the number of people from the south driving through to Tuktoyktuk (which, as we all know is disappearing into the sea because of climate change) but unfortunately, there was no where for them to camp in Tuk, no hotels, no camping, no grocery stores, not even any outdoor facilities. Yet the Dempster was packed with campers, motorcycles and yes, even cyclists making their way north for the great northern adventure. This industry, one which helps people see and appreciate the true natural beauty of the north is the one that will save us. It is the one that will help people in the south understand that if we are going to protect this planet, they must change their ways because the impacts of climate change, as I have said previously, are twice as serious in the north as they are in the rest of Canada and Canada is being hit harder than any other country in the world. On CBC radio last year, a long time scientist and professor from the U of A who has worked in the high north since the 70s said every single Canadian should get a glimpse of the north because if they did, if they could see and appreciate the beauty of this land, they would think twice about how they are living their lives because it all impacts us and too many impacts will leave nothing for future generations.

I am not saying that mining does not have a place in the north, but it does not have and should not have THE place. If we do not want to go the way of single resource industry based provinces such as Alberta, B.C. and Newfoundland, we will move quickly to branch into other areas which will provide jobs, provide a healthy environment and a future. This is why ensuring the protection of protected areas and making sure that protection comes first should be paramount in any MRA and that the administering of that act should be handled just not by the discretion of one minister, but by a collaborative effort of those who are concerned about the continued existence of this land.

Eco tourism, reforestation, green energy industries, on the land training, and education and job training in all of those areas lend themselves well to a diversified economy. When we talk about a new broader and encompassing university, do we talk about programs that will specialize on climate change in the north, northern research and rehabilitation, wildlife protection and enhancement. The times are changing, are we?

Thank you for your time. I know I have covered many areas but I do want to emphasize and the point that mining is not the boon that it used to be nor should it be the future. It is not. Protecting the land and taking advantage of the gifts naturally given rather than something we conceive to its detriment is the thing that will save the north and preserve it for future generations. Mining is just mining is just mining...it will come and go like the substances it tries to produce; but not the land and its four legged inhabitants; it is our job to take care of it and keep it forever.

