



INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AGENCY

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March 13, 2006

Hon. Jim Prentice
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
Ottawa ON K1A 0H4

Dear Minister

Re: Participant Funding for *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* Proceedings

The Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency (IEMA or Agency) was established pursuant to an environmental agreement for the BHP Billiton Ekati diamond mine to serve as a public watchdog over environmental management at the site. One of our duties is to “bring to governments the concerns of Aboriginal Peoples and the general public about the Project and the monitoring and regulation of the Project”.

At our most recent Annual General Meeting, two of our Aboriginal society members in attendance raised the issue of the lack of participant funding for regulatory proceedings under the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*, including those that relate to the Ekati mine. Northern communities and residents have a limited capacity to participate in complex regulatory proceedings that relate to environmental assessment and licencing of resource development.

The Agency is aware that there is no legal requirement for participant funding for environmental assessments in the NWT unlike the federal legislation that prevails in most other parts of the country. The Agency is also aware that several other bodies including the Environmental Management Advisory Board (EMAB, our sister watchdog for the Diavik diamond mine), the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy, and the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board have all made recommendations to your predecessor about the need for a participant funding program to better enable capacity building and a meaningful role for the public in resource development in the NWT.

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We understand that your NWT regional office is conducting a review of possible options for participant funding and we encourage you to support this work and to review the recommendations in a timely fashion.

Sincerely,

-ORIGINAL SIGNED BY-

Bill Ross
Chairperson

cc. Society Members