



Yukon Chamber of Commerce Calls for Balanced, Sustainable Development to be Included in the Draft Peel River Land Use Plan

The Yukon Chamber of Commerce (YCC) is the leading voice of Yukon's business community, providing advocacy and representation on issues affecting business. YCC focuses on issues that impact the following areas:

- Economic Initiatives & Business Development
- Infrastructure Development
- Business Legislation & Regulations

The draft Peel Watershed Land Use Plan has the potential to strongly and negatively impact the Yukon business community and as such YCC deems it important to provide comment.

YCC appreciates the extreme difficulty faced by the Peel Watershed Planning Commission (PWPC) in devising a plan that will achieve all of the objectives noted in Chapter 11 of the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA). At the same time, however, YCC has serious concerns that the approach being taken by the PWPC unreasonably limits the potential for sustainable and balanced development within the Peel Watershed region. Specifically we are concerned that:

- The plan as proposed would result in the closure of an important part of Yukon's mineral endowment, jeopardizing sustainable economic development possibilities for future generations of First Nations, Yukoners and Canadians. It is the best interests of these very groups that are supposed to be considered and protected under the UFA.
- Our existing laws and processes such as YESAA, Mining Land Use Permitting, Quartz Mining Licensing and the Water Board Licensing mechanisms are in place to ensure that appropriate environmental and socioeconomic conditions are being met by any development before it is allowed to proceed. As such, the broad restrictions on resource development under the proposed plan should not be necessary.
- Depriving claim holders in the Peel River area of their ability to move their projects through the existing approval processes would amount to expropriation

without compensation – a very dangerous and potentially litigious action for any government to take in our Canadian democracy.

- Quartz mineral claims are a unique form of land tenure ownership akin to chattels, recognized in a substantial body of case law and the claim holder's rights must be acknowledged.

Based on the above, YCC believes that a balance can be attained. However YCC is very concerned that should the proposed plan as it is currently drafted proceed to implementation, then the rights of claim holder businesses would be taken away.

The quality of life that we enjoy as First Nations, Yukoners and Canadians is and will continue to be made possible by a strong and sustainable economy, with diverse development, conducted in an environmentally and socially responsible manner for the benefit of all.

If we arbitrarily close the door on sustainable development in the Peel Watershed without giving business the opportunity to develop potential projects within the confines of existing approval mechanisms and processes, we eliminate significant economic opportunities for generations to come.

For further information please contact the Yukon Chamber of Commerce.

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