

## Signposts on the Road Map to a YMDS:

### *Suggestions for Another Direction*

*By Dr. Walter Streit and Elizabeth Hofer*

We recognize this process as an important moment in Yukon history and thank you for the opportunity to participate. What we discuss and then recommend as a starting point follows from the principle that any place-based development strategy cannot contradict existing national and global Big Picture commitments and responsibilities. Today's world is driven by the fundamental task of mankind to fight climate change and keep within the earth's carrying capacity. <sup>A</sup>

We reviewed how the federal government and the international community are progressing in ways that direct what will happen to all of us in the coming decades. Then we considered how your current job of re-designing how mining works in the Yukon fits into that overriding framework. The highlights follow and we include a list of references and a brief background at the end. <sup>B</sup>

#### CANADA TAKES ON THE CHALLENGE

Starting with the Paris Agreement and Canada's decision to sign it means we are committed to the goal of limiting the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels by 2050. This leads to a limited budget for greenhouse gas emissions. Once the budget has been exhausted, the economy must be run in a greenhouse-gas-neutral manner. <sup>C (1,2,3,4,5)</sup>

From the 11,000 scientists' report on the Climate Emergency Canada heard the demand to help meet the target we must shift away from using GDP growth as the Holy Grail. <sup>D(6)</sup>

The G7 Ministers' Meeting in 2018, where Canada was notably the chair, resulted in the recognition that transitioning to a sustainable low-carbon economy will depend on 1.) A more circular approach and 2.) Building partnerships with other governments and organizations such as the World Economic Forum and the World Bank, etc. So Canada's role becomes more clear and the direction establishes the need to move toward circular economy as the ultimate solution to the climate change crisis. <sup>E(7,8)</sup>

From the voice of its own youth echoing other countries around the world comes the message with a clear mandate for the ruling class: There is no Planet B. Governments are driven to listen, especially the federal ones. Canada adds incentive to create a better Plan that is reinforced by voters in a federal election and it leads to the Speech from the Throne confirming 2050 target to achieve net-zero emissions and Canada's Plan for Climate Change and clean growth. We are committed. <sup>F(4,5,9,10,11)</sup>

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS PROMOTE ACTION: MEANINGFUL SOLUTIONS

Meanwhile the world's think tanks – including conservative organizations - build the circular economy solution. Work from the UN, the World Bank and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation shows that even if the world manages to convert to green energy only 55% of GHG (green house gas) reduction needed to meet the 2050 target of 1.5 C, the remaining 45% must come from transitioning to a circular economy. And even then it will be hardly possible and assumes that mining is limited to strictly the critical and essential minerals. It is not possible to carry on with business as usual and simply continue developing and extracting resources. <sup>G(12,13,14,15)</sup>

Canada, Finland and the Netherlands led by Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra, have joined forces to advance circular economy and stop resource depletion. There will be 3 international forums in 2021 with the landmark circular economy event of the year, the World Circular Economy Forum, to be held in Canada addressing the steps to establish circular as the fundamental management tool for economies. Finland states their position going forward as "the next level of the circular economy is achieved if all sectors of government work together across administrative silos". While Canada's banner from their youth with the message, There is NO Planet B, coupled with the 11,000 Scientists demand all indicate that everything that is not strictly essential has to be questioned/ stopped worldwide. <sup>H(6,8,9,11,16,17,18,19)</sup>

The EU (European Union) has declared "The European Green Deal" with the goal to transform Europe by 2050 into a GHG-neutral continent based on a transition to circular economy, to clean energy and to a more sustainable lifestyle. <sup>I(18,19)</sup>

## YUKON DIRECTIONS: Should we follow or should we lead?<sup>J</sup>

In the local application of these themes, mining becomes a critical factor and for nonessential minerals a negative factor: <sup>K(15,22,23,24)</sup>

- Consider the implications in times of limited GHG budgets: old existing mines which *already* produce on site according to data from the NRC(National Research Council) and the World Gold Council, about 15% of Yukon's GHG and about another 5-10% for associated transportation. Faro alone locks us into the minimum 15-30% of our budget for the minimum next 15 years. <sup>L(4,5,25,26,27,28,29,30,31)</sup>
- Consider the analysis of which minerals/metals are *essential*: NRC, IRP(International Resource Panel under the UN), the World Bank and even the World Gold Council etc reveal Gold is not critical or essential. <sup>M(12,13,14,24,26)</sup>  
In 2018 worldwide only 340t gold were used in Technology but 1200t were recycled and about 3300t were mined, and the above ground stock is about 190,000t <sup>N(22,25,26,27)</sup>
- Use the end of coal mining in Canada by 2030 as inspiration for implementation of any changes in the Yukon strategy. <sup>O(4,5,32,33)</sup>

- Ask ourselves: What after all is essential in this territory? And how do we ensure that the high quality of life persists? It is clear that Yukoners cannot pay for supplementing the mining industry into the future the way Canada has paid in the past for infrastructure and cleanup, let alone the environmental costs. Reflect on the Faro example: the costs for such a cleanup there estimated to be a minimum of about 500 million would mean a burden for each Yukoner of about \$12,500. As it is, each citizen of Canada has a burden of only \$15. From now on, Yukoners will have to pay for their decisions. So the new YMDS would have to ensure a probabilistic approach to risk assessments in order to avoid Yukon bankruptcy. <sup>P(11,30,38,42)</sup>
- The submissions you have received to date from CPAWS and YCS and First Nations coalition address well the steps that would give you guidance for how to proceed with the pragmatic steps required to bring the Yukon regulation and management of mining to acceptable principles. We endorse their work completely. And would suggest further: <sup>Q(34,35,36)</sup>
  1. With the goalpost then of 2050, how could we face our children's children if we do not work now to limit mining development in a way that guarantees the need for that mineral is critical? <sup>R(8,12,13,14,15,16,22,23,24)</sup>
  2. What is missing? a thorough and independent analysis of the economic and socioeconomic costs and benefits to Yukoners and to Canada including the often ignored long-term data. Such a work would also have to include the missing sociological study of Yukoners about what kind of work they actually want or are willing to do. Many aspects of mining operations are assumed but not proven to be positive. This step also recommended by others - we suggest it go higher up the list of priorities. <sup>S(22,23,30,37,38)</sup>
  3. We found no existing mining operation or government that practices what is needed for Our Green Future. There are models of places that have replaced jobs lost from a transition to a more sustainable economy with new ones in the resulting renewable energy infrastructure and alternative lifestyle methods. Could this YMDS process provide an opportunity to develop a plan that incorporates for once the very long-term needs of the people and the landscape? <sup>T(39,40,41)</sup>

## THE BOTTOM LINE AND THE LAST QUESTION

Whatever happens locally must anticipate the global picture painted by the above abbreviated discussion. What do we want the Yukon to look like in 2050? <sup>V</sup>

The bottom line however is no matter what happens locally, nationally and globally we each of us here must include in decision-making the Voiceless using our current rules "... to include the perspective of all affected parties such as future generations, Mother Earth and land dwellers in planning and decision-making processes". <sup>W(42)</sup>

How will you do that on this Panel?

## Background

Dr Walter Streit grew up in Bavaria, got his degrees (MSc and PhD) as a civil engineer from the Technical University of Munich, was for 25years CEO of Büchting+Streit AG, one out of five leading think tanks for the design of infrastructure like bridges and tunnels in Germany. Several research projects for German authorities about changes toward more sustainable infrastructure became part of his specialty. Chairman of several working groups for German engineering organizations. Numerous scientific publications and talks. Emigrated end of 2016 to the Yukon and since then co-owner of Alpine Bakery, the only certified organic bakery north of 60. The company is run as a social enterprise, as is done in Munich. Besides that has been engaged in several NGOs over many decades. [walter@alpinebakery.ca](mailto:walter@alpinebakery.ca)

Elizabeth Hofer arrived in the Yukon 52 years ago as student and never left. Have enjoyed the privilege of working and living and sharing the landscape with a variety of people over that time in variety of ways, usually in the Bush where avocation meets vocation. Work as a field researcher in ecology in the Kluane region followed years as a trapper, surveyor, cook, barmaid and wilderness guide etc. – the Yukon scene. When the UFA established the Yukon model of co-managing our world, the honour of serving on the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Kluane National Park Management Board and later as a contractor cemented a more formal relationship with the Land and the people who share it here.

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