

To the Mineral Development Strategy Panel,

I am no expert, but I am a long-term resident of Dawson City, and so live closely with the consequences of mining, good and bad!

The Yukon governments EMR department has failed utterly to regulate and enforce regulations on the industry. Promotion of the industry and maintaining the industry's/EMR's self interests has been the focus of the department, resulting in lack of balance and control of the mining sector. Self-regulation has not worked. It appears inspections are seldom carried out, and are lax. Cronyism is rife. The role of regulation and enforcement should be moved to a separate department.

This has led to an imbalance of representation and support in the territorial government. It has appeared to me, and my Dawson neighbours, with whom I have spoken, that mining trumps all other land uses across the board in the Yukon, even riding rough-shod over the appeals of residents having to live next to working mines in their municipality. While the miner got full support of EMR, residents were left to argue their case alone as Dept of Community Services refused to become involved.

To recognise that mining is not appropriate in all locations, independent, professional land use plans should be completed before any area is opened up to mining. No exploration or staking should be allowed until a plan has been completed and identified suitable areas.

When deciding on whether to permit mining operations, the cumulative effect of mines in the vicinity and over time should be taken into account. Integrate the four-step, globally implemented "Mitigation Hierarchy" into project assessments, with the first two steps, "avoid harm" and "minimize harm", prioritized.

Bonds should be of a value to cover all expense of mitigation, and should be required to be paid in full before any permits for work are granted. And, of course royalties should be brought into the real world!

Community members would be much more comfortable living along-side miners if we had confidence that regulations and enforcement were in place to ensure that no ecologically important areas were endangered, mitigation of environmental damage was strictly adhered to, and that bonds of an appropriate value had been posted to ensure that, as tax-payers, we would not be faced with the cost of clean up.

Societies evolve, and new priorities take the place of outdated ones. We become more educated on the environment, and human society needs. An industry that was once viewed as essential to the economy can become burdensome when government-provided benefits and services outweigh income retained in the territory. Thank you for taking on the essential task of looking at the big picture with a modern eye.

Kath Selkirk,
Dawson"
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