

# Our Land

# Our Water

# Our Responsibility

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The federal government is proposing a law called The NWT Devolution Act, also known as Bill C-15. This act changes who takes care of the land and water. This act may affect you more than you think. Find out why many NWT citizens are concerned about it.

**Bill C-15 isn't just about devolution.**  
The bill contains two parts:

## **Part 1 : Devolution**

Changes so that the Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT) will have more control over using our land and resources. This control is being passed from the federal government to the GNWT.

## **Part 2 : Changes to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (MVRMA)**

Changes to the MVRMA, the law that describes how we are to work cooperatively to manage our land and water throughout the Mackenzie Valley.

**These two parts of Bill C-15 do not belong together.**

What are the changes to the MVRMA?



### **Removes regional land and water boards**

One large territorial board will take the place of the four existing boards: the Gwich'in, the Sahtu, the Wek'èezhii and the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Boards. These regional boards have been in place for as long as 14 years. This change goes against existing land claim agreements, which are modern Treaties and must be respected.

### **More federal government control over the boards**

The Minister has the power to force policy on the land and water boards now, but this will be changed to also include the land use planning boards, the Environmental Impact Review Board, and the territorial land and water board. The Minister will also appoint the Chairperson of the territorial board.

People who manage land and water are supposed to make decisions based on evidence and not for political reasons.

# Improvements are needed to how we manage land and water.

The MVRMA contains a part called an audit that requires that the whole environmental management system be carefully reviewed every 5 years. This is the right way to improve the system and is based on evidence and direct involvement of the Aboriginal governments.

There have been two audits (done in 2005 and 2010) with recommendations to improve land and water management in the NWT. Here are some:

## **Finish land use plans**

Finish land use plans so it is clear where development can happen and where land and water need to be protected;

## **Complete land claim negotiations**

Complete land claim negotiations so it is clear how Aboriginal and public governments work cooperatively to make decisions about land and water uses;

## **Provide needed resources**

Provide the resources needed to ensure that boards and community members can manage and participate in land and water management processes in meaningful ways.

## Some of the changes to the MVRMA in Bill C-15 **take control away from NWT and Aboriginal government bodies and put it in Ottawa.**

We can support devolution and oppose MVRMA changes.

The changes to the MVRMA in Bill C-15 don't respond to these important conclusions from the audits.

Devolution is intended to give northerners more say about how their own water and land are used. It brings decision-making closer to home and provides more benefits from development.

With the two laws in one bill, we lose the chance to discuss how we can best manage our land and water.

Have your say.  
Act now !



The MVRMA is about making sure governments live up to the promises made in the Dene and Metis land claim agreements by working together. It came from decades of work and negotiations led by NWT elders and leaders. It set up a system that was different by design. It gave communities a stronger say over their own future. Now, it is being changed by the federal government even though many NWT residents and Aboriginal governments have not agreed with the suggested changes.

### Call an MLA

1-800-661-0784

Call your MLA and say that the GNWT should insist that changes to the MVRMA (not related to devolution) should be taken out of Bill C-15. All MLAs can be reached at the number above or you can leave a message.

### Write an MLA

Legislative Assembly  
PO Box 1320  
Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2L9

NWT MLA's email addresses are available at [www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/meet-members](http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/meet-members)

Write to your MLA and say that the GNWT should insist that changes to the MVRMA (not related to devolution) should be taken out of Bill C-15.

### Write to Stephen Harper

Stephen Harper  
Prime Minister  
Ottawa, ON.

Dennis Bevington  
Member of Parliament  
Ottawa, ON.

Write to Prime Minister Stephen Harper and copy our Member of Parliament Dennis Bevington to say that changes to the MVRMA (not related to devolution) should be taken out of Bill C-15. No postage is required.



*Alternatives North*

For more information

[www.ecologynorth.ca](http://www.ecologynorth.ca)

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867-873-8897

