



Alternatives North

GIANT MINE ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENT SIGNED

June 17, 2015—Alternatives North is pleased to announce the signing of an Environmental Agreement covering the Giant Mine Remediation Project in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. The other parties to the Agreement are the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, City of Yellowknife, North Slave Métis Alliance, Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The legally binding Agreement will ensure independent oversight through a not-for-profit body of experts appointed directly by the signatories. The Government of Canada will provide the Giant Mine Oversight Body with a budget to review ongoing remediation operations and manage research on a permanent solution for the toxic arsenic stored underground.

“This has been a very long struggle for our community to have a more meaningful role in the remediation of the Giant Mine,” said Kevin O’Reilly, of Alternatives North. “We have made significant progress on strong oversight, public reporting, investment in ongoing research, and a requirement for a detailed perpetual care plan. That plan will inform future generations about what has to be done to make the site safe.”

“As a society we don’t get to walk away from Giant Mine,” O’Reilly said, “This Agreement is for the life of the project or basically forever, and sets out an integrated approach to a social licence for the remediation to move forward.”

The Oversight Body will review the design and results of the environmental monitoring programs and management plans, and reporting by the federal and territorial governments on Giant Mine. If the Oversight Body finds the programs, plans or reporting inadequate, the Agreement includes robust provisions for dispute resolution, including binding arbitration.

The Giant Mine Environmental Agreement is a key milestone in the implementation of the 26 binding measures from the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board during the six-year long environmental assessment of the Giant Mine Remediation Project. Through seven negotiating sessions and numerous caucus meetings, Alternatives North worked closely with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, City of Yellowknife and the North Slave Métis Alliance to protect and promote the common interests of local residents.

The signed Giant Mine Environmental Agreement has been posted to the Alternatives North [website](#).

For more information, contact us:

Kevin O’Reilly
Giant Mine Coordinator
Alternatives North
867-920-2765
kor@theedge.ca
www.alternativesnorth.ca

Backgrounder on the Giant Mine Environmental Agreement

The Giant Mine Environmental Agreement is modelled after the environmental agreements that cover the diamond mines in the Northwest Territories, Canada. The Review Board recommended a legally-binding agreement for the Giant Mine Remediation Project. The Agreement was reached following negotiations among the Governments of Canada and the NWT (as the co-proponents for the Project), the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, City of Yellowknife, Alternatives North and the North Slave Métis Alliance. A summary of the provisions of the Agreement is provided below.

Recitals

- Recognition of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation use of the area and effects from Giant Mine
- Recognition of the interests of those downstream of the site and all Canadians

Purpose

- Establishment of an independent oversight body for the Giant Mine Remediation Project and provide for its roles and funding
- Development of a coordinated approach to implementation of the Review Board Measures and suggestions, and commitments made by the federal and territorial governments on remediation of the Giant Mine
- Facilitate collaboration amongst the parties to the Agreement and build public confidence in the Project

Objectives

- Protection of the environment, way of life of Aboriginal peoples and other residents
- Elimination or substantial mitigation of risks
- Comprehensive, integrated ecosystem-based approach to monitoring, management and regulation of the site
- Minimize perpetual care requirements
- Effective communications with future generations about the Project
- Provide advice to the governments managing the Project
- Effective participation of the public and parties in the implementation of the Agreement

Mandate of the Oversight Body

- Monitoring and reporting on the environmental aspects of the Project, nature and quality of public engagement, access to information about the Project, implementation of the Agreement and the Review Board Measures for the Project
- Review and report on the Project's environmental programs and plans, integration of Traditional Knowledge, and land use objectives
- Management of a research program into a long-term solution for underground arsenic at Giant Mine
- Participate as an intervenor in regulatory process and legal proceedings
- Promote public awareness of the Oversight Body and the Agreement
- Establish a public repository of records relevant to its mandate
- Report annually to the public and hold a public meeting
- Provide reports on its activities and evaluations as it sees necessary
- Set timelines for reporting and responses by the Giant Mine Remediation Project

Establishment of the Oversight Body

- The Oversight Body will become a party to the Agreement after it is established as a non-profit society
- Each party to the Agreement becomes a member of the Oversight Body society and directly appoints a Director to the Board of the Oversight Body
- A Director must act in the best interests of the society and not as a representative of the party that appointed them
- Canada or GNWT must remain members of the Oversight Body society

Funding of the Oversight Body

- Interim funding provided for the partial first year of operation of the Oversight Body including start-up costs
- General operations funding for the Oversight Body of \$650,000/year indexed to the Consumer Price Index for Yellowknife until the Agreement is terminated (only with the agreement of all parties)
- Research program funding to the Oversight Body to identify research opportunities and priorities of \$525,000 over first four years and then \$250,000/year indexed to the Consumer Price Index for Yellowknife until the Agreement is terminated (only with the agreement of all parties)
- Commitment by Canada to create flexible long-term funding arrangements including carry-over of unspent funds into the research program

Responsibilities of the Giant Mine Remediation Project

- General requirement to share information and reports with the parties to the Agreement
- Maintain environmental programs and plans
- Develop a comprehensive perpetual care plan that addresses record management, communication with future generations, long-term access to funding and analysis of different possible future scenarios, with a first draft within five years
- Report spills, accidents and significant malfunctions and responses to the Oversight Body
- Prepare annual reports on the Giant Mine Remediation Project including a summary of monitoring results, changes to plans and programs, analysis of trends, progress on the Review Board Measures and suggestions, and a plain language summary
- Provide access to background information and referenced documents
- Prepare periodic status of the environment reports that include an assessment of long-term effects of the Project, adaptive management performance, cumulative effects, and a plain language summary
- Commission an independent project review every 20 years that includes the results of ongoing research, is participatory and is procedurally fair

Dispute Resolution

- Step wise dispute resolution including negotiation, mediation and arbitration
- Oversight Body has authority to initiate dispute resolution for non-compliance of the Giant Mine Remediation Project with the Agreement
- Parties to the Agreement may participate in a mediation and have a right to participate in an arbitration

Implementation, Review and Amendment of the Agreement

- Twice yearly meetings to be held by the parties to the Agreement to review implementation
- Agreement to be reviewed after the first five years and every ten years thereafter
- Agreement can be amended at any time by written agreement of all the parties
- Agreement is for the life of the Project and completion of any and all required monitoring and management

For full details and interpretation, please review the full Agreement as posted to the Alternatives North website at www.alternativesnorth.ca