



The GNWT Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment is currently reviewing a draft version of the territory's first Mineral Resources Act.

# Mineral Resources Act needs preventative maintenance

Do a quick google search, and you'll find that preventative maintenance is maintenance regularly performed on equipment to lessen the likelihood of it failing. It is performed while the equipment is still working so that it does not break down unexpectedly.

If you owned a delivery business that relied on a truck for its success, you'd make sure you were putting some of your profits into keeping the truck well maintained. The last thing you'd want is for it to fail and your income to then suffer.

What a great concept to write into the NWT's first ever Mineral Resources Act!

We have a powerfully

strong mining industry generating over \$2 billion annually. This provides thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions in annual business spending and taxes. Unfortunately, it's maturing and we don't have enough new mines in our future to keep the benefits coming.

What about exploration, you ask? Isn't that supposed to find those new mines to sustain the business and the benefits?

Well, tragically, we've let our exploration investment slide and it's been at all-time lows for 12 years running now. So our ability to find new mines has been hamstrung. It is not commodity markets and it is

not poor geology. In relation to Nunavut and the Yukon we have missed out on over \$1.5 billion in exploration expenditures.

### Keep business running at top form

Clearly, we need preventative maintenance, to keep our business running at top form.

So when the prospect of the first ever NWT Mineral Resources Act presents itself, wouldn't it make sense to build that fresh new concept into it?

If you study what's proposed in the Mineral Resources Act, you'll find the only real innovation is to legislate the negotiation of Indigenous benefit agreements.

We're all for Indigenous benefit agreements. Indigenous governments already negotiate these agreements themselves with the mines. All of our mines have them. So they're not innovative or a risk. In fact, with government intervening, we're concerned that it might actually create risk to investors.

Our chamber presented its thoughts to the GNWT. We suggested a preventative maintenance plan that would have government do two things:

Share a percentage of annual mineral exploration investment with Indigenous governments whose traditional lands are being explored; and when this results in a new mine discovery, government then share an additional percentage of the new royalties collected with those same Indigenous governments on whose lands the mine is developed.

This would provide recognition to those Indigenous governments who support exploration and mining and they would receive the added benefits.

These new benefits would be in addition to all of the other existing royalty benefits under land claim and devolution agreements, and in addition to benefits under agreements that Indigenous governments already negotiate themselves with developers.

We think this would provide an important incentive to more exploration and mining.

We also recommend that government pay these amounts from existing royalties and windfall taxes they are collecting

from industry. It would make sense for government to take some of its profits from the industry it values and reinvest them back into ensuring the machinery of the mineral industry keeps running, continuing to provide the significant benefits we Northerners have grown accustomed to.

As we develop our first ever NWT Minerals Act, let's be bold and creative, and make a positive difference.

We urge you to share your thoughts with the government or your MLA on this concept.



**GUEST Columnist**

Gary Vivian is president of the NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines

## Our Beautiful North PHOTO CONTEST

If you're from the Northwest Territories and have a great photo that captures life in your home community we'd love to see it!



The Beauty of the North is endless, and we want to see what that means to you! We want to celebrate how we live in the North, from hunting and fishing, scenery and wildlife, to arts and culture - show us what's beautiful about where you live.

Submit your entries via the Facebook messenger to our NNSL.com page each week by 4 p.m. Thursday, and we'll post the contestants each Friday on our Facebook page. There our readers will vote for that week's winner with their likes, comments and shares - voting closes each Thursday at noon.

**The photo with the most votes at the end of the week's voting will receive \$100.**

Winners photos may be used in NNSL publications.



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