



Media Release—February 25, 2026

**Documents show the mining industry has ‘captured’ NWT regulator**

(Yellowknife) Alternatives North has uncovered that the GNWT met secretly with the mining industry about developing new mining regulations for at least a year before allowing the rest of the public into the latest public engagement. The discovery was made through an Access to Information request that resulted in the release of more than 800 pages of documents concerning communications between the GNWT Department of Industry Trade and Investment (ITI) and the mining industry on the development of regulations that will govern that sector.

The documents offer very strong evidence of ‘regulatory capture’ with the Mineral Resources Act regulations policy intentions appearing to reflect industry positions and interests which are not necessarily the same as the public interest. Regulatory capture happens when a regulator is co-opted to serve the commercial interests of those for whom it sets the rules.

Frequent meetings (11 over a one-year period from August 2024 to September 2025), phone calls, emails, presentations, documents, comparative reviews, and other information were shared between ITI and mining industry, but there were no public disclosures of this information. There were also no other known exchanges with anyone else or the public on the subject, other than with Indigenous governments that are part of the drafting process.

Ironically, documents show that discussions on ‘transparency’ took place during secret meetings between ITI and Chamber of Mines on January 14 and February 28, 2025.

ITI held no public engagements on the development of regulations for the Mineral Resources Act between February 1, 2023 and October 28, 2025.

ITI is responsible for securing a fair share of royalties and benefits for public and Indigenous governments from the mining sector.

“No other party enjoys such frequent and high-level access to senior GNWT officials,” said Kevin O’Reilly, a spokesperson for Alternatives North. “This unprecedented and privileged access is for an economic sector that is supposed to be regulated by ITI.”

“Alternatives North believes,” O’Reilly said, “that there is a need for much greater transparency and accountability moving forward regarding the development of the Mineral Resources Act regulations and implementation of the new regime.”

Alternatives North recommends, for example:

- making all comparative reviews and research public;
- public release of all submissions on the development of the regulations by those outside government and detailed written responses;
- disclosure of meetings and correspondence;
- multi-stakeholder engagements; and
- a public registry with user-specified notifications.

For further information see the attached Backgrounder and contact:

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