



Alternatives North



September 1, 2026

Honourable Caitlin Cleveland
Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment
Government of the Northwest Territories
Box 1320
Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9

Submitted Electronically

Dear Minister Cleveland:

Re: Follow-Up to the Meeting on the Regulations for the Mineral Resources Act

Thank you and your staff for meeting with us on August 20, 2026 regarding the development of regulations for the Mineral Resources Act (MRA). This was a useful and helpful exchange. If this had taken place earlier in the development process for the regulations, we would have saved ourselves reviewing, considering, and responding time on the policy intention engagements. We have a number of issues we would like to address in this letter and through further meetings with you and your staff.

Improving Public Engagement

You noted that there is much agreement on the need to improve public engagement in the development of resource management legislation, regulations and policy by GNWT. We have made numerous recommendations on how this can and should take place earlier and in parallel with the necessary Intergovernmental Council co-drafting process with Indigenous government. We point to the following documents that provide concrete recommendations:

- [Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report on Bill 74: Forest Act](#) (September 27, 2023);
- [Letter dated January 13, 2023, from Kevin O'Reilly, MLA, to Ministers of Environment and Natural Resources, Industry, Tourism and Investment, and Lands regarding Public Participation in Resource Management](#); and
- [Alternatives North letter to GNWT Ministers on public engagement in drafting of resource management legislation/regulations](#) (February 24, 2023).

We would be happy to offer our experience and perspectives in any discussions to review or evaluate the development of GNWT public resource management legislation, regulations or policy.

More specifically in the context of the MRA regulations, we encourage you and your staff to proactively reach out to us. Our consistent, detailed and constructive input speaks for itself. We encourage more face-to-face public and multi-stakeholder engagements, as early as possible. We understand that your staff will take these issues and respond further.

Access to Information

Your August 7, 2026 response letter to us provided two cross-jurisdictional reviews that are at least four years old. It would have been helpful for this information to be made public at the time.

To clarify, we have never asked for or expected to be provided access to the Technical Working Group or GNWT internal legal advice. However, publicly available GNWT contracting information shows ITI having commissioned a number of important policy and technical contracts, for example:

- Royalty and financial modeling to Beach Meadows (Michael Doggett) \$123,000 over 2022-25;
- Staking scenarios research to Archibald Robb Consulting \$24,000 in 2021;
- Dispute resolution advice to Dragon Toner \$100,000 in 2022;
- Environment, sustainability and governance standards to Hemmera Envirochem \$40,000 in 2022; and
- Mineral Administration and Registry System (MAARS) to Spatial Dimension Canada \$370,000 in 2023-24 and Borden, Gervais and Ladner \$50,000 in 2022-23.

Public money being expended on public policy information should be shared to ensure more meaningful and informed input by all stakeholders. It would have been helpful if this research, or at least summaries and findings, were made public. Consultants should also have the opportunity to talk to other stakeholders. ITI still has time to correct this situation.

ITI continues to have ongoing, intensive, direct and privileged engagement with the mining industry with little to no corresponding effort to engage the broader public. Information shared with industry should be made available to the public, especially given ITI's dual and conflicting role of promoter and regulator. Presentations and correspondence with the mining industry should be put up on the GNWT MRA webpage, and brought to the attention of all that have previously commented during public engagements.

Sustainable Land Use

Although we requested evidence of how ITI has considered sustainable land use, one of the stated purposes and goals of the MRA (s. 6), we did not receive any assurance that this has been done in any careful or systematic fashion to “provide a framework for responsible and balanced mineral prospecting, exploration, development and production”.

We continue to be dismayed that environmental baseline will be removed as eligible work to keep mining claims in good standing because the mining industry has not used it, the mining industry has not requested it, and a mistaken belief that ITI would then have to regulate it or evaluate such work if it were submitted. Just because the mining industry doesn’t ask for something doesn’t mean it isn’t a worthwhile option for a more progressive approach to the mining cycle. You committed to discussions with the ECC Minister regarding how the departments might work together on this aspect. We look forward to discussing the outcomes of this item in particular, and other ways to demonstrate how sustainable land use is being considered in the development of the regulations.

MAARS, Public Registry and Online Map Staking

Alternatives North (AN) and Ecology North (EN) and indeed the public, have never been asked what we would like to see in terms of public access to decision-making on mineral rights. We were very disappointed, but not completely surprised, to hear that there will initially be limited links and integration among the MAARS, public registry and online map staking. We also point out that the co-management bodies have years of experience in designing and managing transparent and inclusive public registries that allow and encourage public access and notification systems. Mineral rights should be treated no differently.

We support the rights of Indigenous governments and Indigenous communities to have proactive disclosure of mineral rights decision-making in their areas of interest, while asserting that community governments, surface rights holders and the public should have the ability to set notification preferences. This is consistent with and demanded by the “responsible and balanced framework” to be delivered transparently, and building positive relationships as set out in section 2 of the MRA. We urge you to ensure that this promise is kept.

Further to the technical meeting discussion, we understand that it is ITI’s position that map staking will result in increased economic activity, less conflicts with Indigenous governments and reduced environmental impacts. While we remain concerned, we are seeking a commitment from you to ensure that implementation of map staking is properly documented, including its economic and environmental footprints, and publicly reported on after a reasonable period of time.

Lastly, we were astonished to hear from your staff that ITI has concluded s.22 of the MRA, which prohibits prospecting and staking of mining claims where the surface right holder has not consented or there is no access order, does not apply to online map staking. A similar provision is already in place as s. 6 of the current *Mining Regulations*. We note that the MRA makes no distinction between mining claims applied for through ground staking or map staking and the MRA was written with the intention of regulating map staking. In addition, the Mining Recorder does not appear to have any discretion to ignore s. 22. Please be advised that we will be seeking a legal opinion on this matter and we would urge you to do the same.

Further Engagement

We were not able to finish the discussion with your staff on a number of matters, most specifically Socio-Economic Agreements and Temporary Restricted Areas. In general, it was a helpful discussion and some of our concerns have been resolved, particularly around removal of minerals. We will work with your staff to try to make the best use of our limited time and resources, on all sides, to understand and potentially resolve additional issues.

We look forward to your response to the process and substantive issues raised in this letter. We look forward to further opportunities to provide informed and early input into the development of the regulations for the MRA.

Sincerely,



Kevin O'Reilly
On behalf of Alternatives North



Dawn Tremblay
On behalf of Ecology North

cc. Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITICommunications@gov.nt.ca)
Intergovernmental Council Secretariat
Clerk, Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment