



Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency

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July 3, 2012

Zoe Raemer
Acting Regional Director General
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
P.O. Box 1500
Yellowknife NT X1A 2R3

Dear Ms. Raemer

Re: Inspections of Ekati Diamond Mine

The Agency is concerned about the on-going capacity of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) to carry out land and water inspections at the Ekati diamond mine. The Agency raised similar concerns in letters dated February 2, 2002 and April 28, 2006 that resulted in action to address the issue.

We have noticed a decline in the number of inspections from 2010-11 when nine were conducted to 2011-12 when only six were undertaken. To be very clear, we are not critical in any way of the work of the current inspector who frequently meets with us and shares information. We believe he has done an outstanding job and has shown initiative in investigating matters and finding solutions. We simply wish that more of the inspector's time be devoted to the largest mine in the NWT.

Inspections need to be maintained and even increased as Ekati enters a critical phase where action on closure and reclamation is growing in importance. Significant changes are also taking place at site including the opening of a new pit (Pigeon), recommencement of mining at an old pit (Misery), and adding the storage of tailings at Beartooth Pit set to begin later this year.

The Agency has praised the work of previous inspectors in our Annual reports. Inspection reports, both written and verbal, have been of great assistance to the Agency in carrying out our mandate. Such reports keep us informed of activities on site and may raise issues (and potential issues) of mutual interest with performance and compliance with the terms and conditions of licenses, permits and leases. We believe this reporting and these reports also help the Government of Canada to fulfil its responsibilities concerning the Mine.

We respectfully request that AANDC place a higher priority on inspector recruitment and assignment of the Ekati diamond mine to ensure an adequate inspection program is in place as soon as possible.

We look forward to your reply and the timely assignment of the more resources to the Ekati Mine. Please do not hesitate to contact our office should you wish any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Ross". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "W." and the last name "Ross" clearly distinguishable.

Bill Ross
Chairperson

cc. Society Members

Mark Cliffe-Phillips, Executive Director, Wek'eezhi Land Water Board

Annette Hopkins, Director of Operations, AANDC

Doug Crossley, Chair, Environmental Monitoring Advisory Board

Johnny Weyallon, Chairperson, Snap Lake Environmental Monitoring Agency