

Minister of Indian Affairs
and Northern Development



Ministre des Affaires
indiennes et du Nord canadien

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H4

MAY 10 2002

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MAY 23 2002

Bob

Ms. Constance Wolfe
565 Olympic View Drive
COUPEVILLE WA 98239

Dear Ms. Wolfe:

Thank you for your e-mail of April 9, 2002, in which you expressed concern regarding potential harm to the environment of the South Nahanni River area, as a result of the possible re-activation of the Prairie Creek mine.

I fully recognize the importance of this region and can assure you that departmental officials will continue to work closely with the affected parties to ensure that the environment is protected. Canada's commitment to the protection and careful management of the region is evidenced in part by the implementation of the Deh Cho First Nations Interim Measures Agreement. As a result, a Regional Land Use Planning Committee has been established. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada is working with the First Nations to identify lands to be withdrawn from disposition as an interim measure as part of the Deh Cho land, resource, and self-government negotiations process. The withdrawal of land will ensure those areas are protected from future land disposals or rights issuance, throughout the negotiations process with the First Nation.

In December 1999, my colleague, the Honourable David Anderson, Minister of the Environment and I committed to the development of a general Cumulative Effects Assessment and Management Strategy and Framework for the Northwest Territories (NWT). Due to existing development pressures we also committed to the development of a Plan of Action for the Deh Cho region. A multi-stakeholder Steering Committee with representation from regional Aboriginal governments, the Government of Canada, territorial governments, industry and environmental groups is guiding this initiative.

In the interim, activities in the region are being carefully regulated and closely monitored by the regulatory agencies, the governments of Canada and the NWT to ensure this area is protected. I am confident that decisions made with regard to mining and other possible developments in the region will be consistent with ensuring the ecological integrity of this important region.

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I am pleased you have chosen to vacation so often in Canada and I appreciate you taking the time to raise these matters with me.

Yours sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
CHIEF OF SECRETARY
ROBERTO NAULT

Robert Nault, P.C., M.P.

c.c.: Mr. Vern Christensen
The Honourable Sheila Copps, P.C., M.P.