



**CANADIAN PARKS AND
WILDERNESS SOCIETY
NWT CHAPTER**

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To: Hon. Robert Nault
Minister of Indian and Northern
Affairs Canada

From: Greg Yeoman
Conservation Director
CPAWS-NWT

Fax: (613) 996-1759

Date: March 27, 2002

Pages: (including cover): 3

**RE: The MVEIRB Report of Environmental Assessment on the Canadian Zinc Corporation
Underground Decline/Exploratory Drilling and Metallurgical Pilot Plant Developments**

cc. Grand Chief Michael Nadli, Deh Cho First Nations
The Honourable Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage
The Honourable David Anderson, Minister of Environment
The Honourable Robert G. Thibault, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
The Honourable Herb Dhaliwal, Minister of Natural Resources
Mr Tom Lee, CEO, Parks Canada Agency
Mr. Vern Christensen, Executive Director, MVEIRB
Mr. Bob Wooley, Executive Director, MVLWB
Annalisa Koeman IUCN Programme on Protected Areas

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March 27, 2002

Hon. Robert Nault, P.C., M.P.,
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development,
10 Wellington St North Tower
Hull, Quebec, K1A 0H4
Fax: (819) 953-4941

Re: The MVEIRB Report of Environmental Assessment on the Canadian Zinc Corporation Underground Decline/Exploratory Drilling and Metallurgical Pilot Plant Developments

Dear Minister Nault,

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society-NWT Chapter (CPAWS-NWT) has been an active participant in the environmental assessment (EA) process for the Prairie Creek mine located just outside the Nahanni National Park Reserve (NNPR). We intend to remain a participant in any consultation process which may take place regarding the findings of the EA. As we indicated in our EA submission, we have serious concerns about the implications of this proposed mine and its existing infrastructure on the ecological integrity of NNPR.

We understand that cyanide, PCBs and diesel fuel have been stored at the mine site near Prairie Creek for 20 years. The region is known to be prone to flash floods and has experienced significant earthquakes (as high as 6.9 on the Richter scale) and associated rock slides within the past 20 years. This puts the waters of Prairie Creek and the South Nahanni River at risk from contamination from toxic chemicals stored on site. In addition, the ores at the proposed mine are highly contaminated with mercury, as well as arsenic and antimony, which further increases the risks to water quality should the mine go ahead.

As part of this EA process, CPAWS-NWT has attempted to have the surface leases for the mine (95-F/10-7-2 and 95-F/10-5-3) made publicly available. The leases contain the terms and conditions by which Canadian Zinc currently occupies the mine site, as well as security deposit information. We understand that the surface leases have expired, and it appears there is no security deposit posted for the mine site. However, in spite of our requests through the MVEIRB and Access to Information processes, your department has refused to make these documents available.

The absence of the terms and conditions of the surface leases have caused uncertainty in the EA process about what aspects of the mine's activities are covered under the lease, and what should be within the scope of the EA. Having these terms and conditions publicly available is also

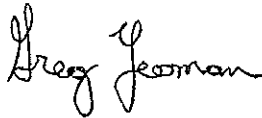
necessary to ensure that all environmental regulatory requirements are being adhered to, cumulative impacts are adequately being monitored and addressed in the EA process, and to help determine a security deposit amount for the mine site.

We have also requested that the Prairie Creek Mine Reclamation Project report, which provides an estimate of the costs of reclaiming the mine site, as well as a list of toxic chemicals being stored at the site. This report would also provide information on cumulative impacts monitoring and for determining an adequate security deposit.

We believe that your department has a duty to keep the Canadian public informed of the financial and environmental liabilities and risks associated with development proposals under your jurisdiction, as well as to provide the information necessary to carry out complete and effective regulatory oversight and environmental assessment. We therefore request that you make the surface leases and Prairie Creek Mine Reclamation Project report available for public review for the duration of the Environmental Assessment and regulatory phases of this application.

We look forward to your response on this issue, and to the release of these documents for public review.

Sincerely,



Greg Yeoman
Conservation Director
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society –
Northwest Territories Chapter

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