



FOR RELEASE
March 31, 2014

Yukon government putting modern environmental protection measures in place

WHITEHORSE—Bill 73, the *Environment Act*, was tabled in the Yukon Legislative Assembly today. It modernizes the existing act so that the Government of Yukon can more effectively deal with activities such as recycling, solid waste management plans and contaminated sites.

"The updated *Environment Act* not only helps the Yukon government protect human and environmental health but it also provides for increased opportunities for business," Minister of Environment Currie Dixon said. "It reflects the input received during last year's public review as well as administrative changes that have taken place in the territory since the act came into force in 1991."

The updated act further enables

- Reducing the risk to human health and the environment
- Advancing sustainable development, and
- Improving consistency with Yukon's current legislative practices.

"We heard through the public review that Yukoners support a modern and effective environmental protection regime for the territory," Dixon added. "The changes will not affect the act's goals and values but will enhance the Yukon government's ability to be an effective partner in environmental stewardship."

The *Environment Act* sets out how the Yukon government protects the natural environment while supporting sustainable development. It was first enacted following significant public consultation and is supported by 13 regulations.

Learn more:

Visit: www.env.gov.yk.ca/environmentact

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See backgrounder below.

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Backgrounder: Bill 73, the *Environment Act*

The *Environment Act* came into force in 1991. This legislation was created in response to growing public interest and concern for environmental health and protection. It was developed following two rounds of public consultation.

A 75-day public review took place from August 1 to October 14, 2013. It received 64 responses to proposed changes addressing hazardous substances, inspections, industry-led recycling programs, contaminated sites, the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment, the Yukon Conservation Strategy and solid and special waste management plans. Respondents included individuals (43), municipalities, First Nations, non-governmental organizations and industry.

Key changes to the act

All changes to the updated act serve to meet one or more of the following goals: reducing risk to human and environmental health; supporting industry involvement; and improving the act's consistency with the Yukon government's current legislative regime.

Specific changes to the act (grouped by goal) are:

Reduced risk to human health and the environment

- Enhanced ability to ban hazardous substances by allowing the Minister to enforce a ban
- More clarity around inspection powers on private property

Advancing sustainable development

- Allowing for industry-led recycling programs
- Supporting redevelopment opportunities by allowing responsibility for contaminated sites to be transferred from one person to another

Improving consistency with Yukon's current legislative practices

- Increasing flexibility by allowing the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment to be made active when necessary
- Supporting consideration of other information sources by allowing the Yukon Conservation Strategy to be reviewed and/or updated at the discretion of the Minister, rather than every three years
- Enabling more responsive solid and special waste management plans by providing for Ministerial – rather than Cabinet – approval and amendment of plans

The updated act also has minor administrative amendments that modernize its language and structure.

News Release #14-080

