



FOR RELEASE
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Government seeks feedback on changes to mining legislation

WHITEHORSE— The Yukon government is seeking feedback, from today until July 31, on proposed changes to the *Quartz Mining Act*, the *Placer Mining Act* and appropriate regulations. The proposed changes respond to court direction and support positive relationships among First Nations and the exploration and mining industries.

"We are consulting on measures aimed at ensuring that Class 1 exploration activities are carried out responsibly," Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources Brad Cathers said. "First Nations and other land users have expressed interest in more information on Class 1 activities, and a recent court decision has also confirmed Yukon's requirements to consult on mining exploration activities at a Class 1 level with non-settled First Nations, to the extent those activities may adversely affect Aboriginal rights."

Class 1 programs are small-scale mineral exploration activities that generally have minimal impact on the environment. Currently, prospectors undertaking these activities on mineral claims are not required to inform the government of their work.

The proposed amendments establish a system for the mineral exploration industry to notify the Yukon government of Class 1 programs before undertaking work on mineral claims, and for government to ensure that these programs are carried out in a responsible manner, respectful of asserted Aboriginal rights. These changes will assist the government in meeting its legal obligations resulting from the December 27, 2012, Yukon Court of Appeal decision.

The proposed amendments also enable the Yukon government to establish additional operating conditions in areas with special environmental or socio-economic concerns. These identified areas could include Category B Settlement Lands or designated areas identified in land use planning.

"We will continue our work in ensuring a solid regulatory regime that provides certainty and supports the strengthening of relationships among First Nations and the mining industry," Cathers added.

The December Yukon Court of Appeal decision in *Ross River Dena Council vs Yukon Government* declared that the Government of Yukon has a duty to notify and, where appropriate, consult with and accommodate the Ross River Dena Council before allowing any mining exploration activities to take place within the Ross River area, to the extent that those activities may prejudicially affect asserted Aboriginal rights of the Ross River Dena Council.

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