



FOR RELEASE
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Public review of Environment Act updates launched

WHITEHORSE—The Government of Yukon is seeking public comment on proposed changes to the Environment Act.

"Modernizing the *Environment Act* will help us meet the needs of environmental management in the twenty-first century," Environment Minister Currie Dixon said. "The changes we are proposing reflect new methods of environmental management that weren't contemplated when the act was originally drafted over 20 years ago."

Each of the seven proposed changes address one or more of the following goals:

- Reduce risk to human health and the environment
- Advance sustainable development, and
- Improve consistency with Yukon's current legislative practices.

The Proposed Amendments to the *Environment Act* discussion document is available from all Environment Yukon offices, territorial agents and online. The deadline for comments is October 14. Comments can be provided by mail, online, fax or email.

"The Yukon government is committed to a modern, effective environmental protection regime for the territory," Dixon said. "We are holding this public review because we want to make sure the *Environment Act* continues to give us the tools we need to protect our environment and also reflects the values of Yukoners."

The *Environment Act* was enacted in 1991. It sets out how the Yukon government protects essential relationships between living things, while supporting sustainable development. It recognizes at all times the importance of a healthy natural environment.

For more information about the public review and to provide comments online visit www.env.gov.yk.ca/environmentact.

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BACKGROUND

Public review of *Environment Act* updates launched

The *Environment Act* sets out how the Government of Yukon shall manage solid waste, recyclables, contaminants and other activities in order to protect environmental and human

health. It was enacted in 1991 following significant public consultation and is supported by 13 regulations that deal with specific activities such as recycling, pesticide use and solid waste management.

This discussion document sets out the proposed changes to the *Environment Act* as follows:

Reduce risk to human health and the environment

1. Hazardous Substances – Enhance ability to ban hazardous substances
2. Inspections – Allow inspection of hazardous substances or activities of non-permit holders

Advance sustainable development

1. Recycling – Allow for industry-led recycling programs
2. Contaminated Sites – Support redevelopment opportunities by third parties

Improve consistency with Yukon's current legislative practices

1. Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment – Enable increased flexibility in operations
2. Yukon Conservation Strategy – Support consideration of other information sources
3. Solid and Special Waste Management Plans – Enable more responsive management plans by providing for Ministerial approval and amendment of plans

The government may also make minor amendments (administrative in nature) in order to modernize the language and structure of the act.

The discussion document sets out what the act says for each of these areas, identifies the issue(s), details the proposed change and provides additional background where necessary. Comment is sought on whether the proposed change is of concern and any additional considerations that should be taken into account. A summary of the responses received will be sent to all individuals who provide contact information when sending in their comments.

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