



FOR RELEASE  
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## **Government of Yukon remains vigilant in water testing**

WHITEHORSE—The Yukon government will test the community well in Keno City monthly for the next six months and will test quarterly after that to give the community's residents assurance that their public water source is safe.

Health and Social Services Minister Doug Graham said today that in addition to monthly testing by Community Services, the Department of Health and Social Services, through its Environmental Health Services Unit, will cover the cost of water testing for any private wells in the area.

The minister's comments follow the release of recent test results from a shallow ground water monitoring well installed as part of the closure and remediation of abandoned mines located in proximity to Keno City by Elsa Reclamation and Development Corp (ERDC), a subsidiary of Alexco Resources. This well is about 70 metres from the entry to the Onek adit.

Four private wells in close proximity to the test well all fell within Canadian guidelines when last tested in 2010. However the minister cautioned that until those wells have been tested again, residents are advised not to use the water for drinking or other activities.

"We do not believe there is any cause for concern, but we recognize that Keno residents want assurances about the quality of their drinking water and we are taking steps to ensure public safety and to protect the integrity of the public water source," Graham said.

Results of one monitoring well have shown high levels of cadmium (1200ug/L) and zinc (70,000 ug/L). Acceptable levels for drinking water are 5 ug/L for cadmium and 5000 ug/L for zinc. The minister said these findings are consistent with what would be expected near an old adit and reflect water data collected for the past 20 years in the immediate area.

Cadmium is a rare metal that exists naturally in the environment. It is chemically similar to zinc and occurs naturally with zinc and lead in sulphide ores. When ingested, cadmium is deposited in the liver and kidneys and in high dosages can cause kidney damage and osteoporosis. Cigarette smoking is also an important source of cadmium exposure.

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