



Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee

December 11, 2006

Hon. Michael McLeod, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources
Government of the Northwest Territories
Legislative Assembly
Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9

Hon. Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Development
Government of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

RE: Dehcho Land Use Plan Revisions and Committee Role

Dear Sirs,

The Government of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Dehcho First Nations have stated that they want an approved land use plan for the Dehcho territory. At a meeting with Bob Overvold, Regional Director General for INAC on November 24, 2006, we were given a copy of the November 22 letter from the federal and territorial negotiators to Georges Erasmus, Dehcho First Nations Chief Negotiator, regarding Dehcho Process negotiations and the federal/territorial response to the Dehcho Land Use Plan. In this letter, your negotiators stated concerns with the level of conservation and the conformity requirements, and your intent to terminate the Committee.

Following its mandate under the Dehcho First Nations Interim Measures Agreement, the Committee has completed the Final Draft Dehcho Land Use Plan based on extensive research and over 140 consultations, on time and on budget. The IMA outlines an ongoing role for the Committee to implement and monitor conformity of land uses with the Plan, and allocates ongoing funding for this purpose until the effective date of a Dehcho Final Agreement.

The Committee completed 3 rounds of revisions to address the substantial comments provided by your departments on earlier drafts of the Plan. Leading up to submission of the land use plan for approval the Committee requested on at least 3 separate occasions that both governments provide us with specific plan revisions on zoning and conformity requirements and substantiate these requests. We are again requesting direct and specific notification of your concerns with the zoning and conformity requirements of the Plan so that we may take appropriate steps to address them. This is consistent with the IMA and the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*. The MVRMA states "Where a party to which a land use plan is submitted does not approve the plan, that party shall notify the other parties and the planning board, in writing, of the reasons for not approving the plan." (S. 43 (5))

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It has always been the understanding of the Committee that following the submission of the plan that government would respond directly to the Committee with the above referenced information. We recognize that the land use plan requires negotiation between the three Parties to reach consensus on revisions. The Committee has an important role to play in the revisions, plan implementation and monitoring land use in the Dehcho territory for conformity to the plan. (IMA Appendix 2 Section 24)

An approved land use plan will benefit all parties by providing clarity and certainty regarding land use priorities and requirements. This information will inform and streamline the regulatory and environmental assessment processes. Government, industry and communities have commenced implementation of the plan. The Plan will promote economic development in advance of a final agreement by clearly outlining which areas are most suitable at this time and by promoting stronger relationships between communities and industry.

The Directors and staff of the Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee remain committed to achieving an approved and implemented land use plan that is acceptable to all three Parties. If however, you choose to undo five years of work and capacity building worth over \$4 million, then we respectfully request that you provide the Committee sufficient notice to meet all our financial and legal obligations. We look forward to your timely response on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Chief Tim Lennie
Vice-Chairperson
Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee

Cc: Dehcho Chiefs and Metis Presidents