

SHADOWOOD

EXPLORATION SERVICES

October 8, 2004

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Executive Director
Deh Cho Land Use planning Committee
Fort Providence, NT
XOE OLO

Dear Heidi,

I would like to thank you for providing me with the opportunity to attend the meeting in Vancouver on August 27th. The overview you presented on the Land Use Process was comprehensive and informative and it is clear that a considerable amount of work and resources have been put into the Process. Also, your positive reception to input from the people attending the meeting was very much appreciated.

During the last 20 years, I have worked within the Deh Cho Territory and surrounding areas on a number of mineral exploration projects and am familiar with the resource potential, wildlife and environment. I submit the following comments to you from the perspective of someone who is at least somewhat informed about the region:

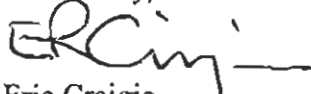
1. The Land Use Atlas that has been compiled for the region is an outline of resources and activities, *as they are now known*. The Atlas consists of a large number of attractively designed resource maps. However, the quality of the presentation is not a reflection of the data upon which it is based. These data are, in some cases, very limited and, in other cases, inaccurate. The maps are, at best, an approximation of reality. With additional knowledge, future maps will look very different than the current ones. The Land Use Process will result in a number of decisions that will have significant impact with respect to parks, protected areas, traditional land use regions and resource development. These decisions will be based on an inadequate database. I know that there is neither time nor the financial resources to correct this, but the limitations of the database should be of concern to the land use planners.
2. As the atlas and maps suggest, there is relatively low resource potential and minimal probability of significant developments within most of the Deh Cho region. Given this low resource base, a sensible land use process that was designed to provide maximum benefit to the Deh Cho people would allow for maximum development within the few areas of higher potential. However, the exact opposite is happening. The areas with higher resource potential for timber, minerals, oil and gas, etc. are the focal points for areas designated for protection. None of these areas is ecologically sensitive or distinct. They are being given protected status simply to preclude development. It is obvious that the Land Use

Process has been high jacked by environmentalists – the agenda is anti-development and the process is protection. It is not being driven by, nor is it functioning in the best interests of the Deh Cho people. The land use decisions that are being contemplated will not be beneficial to current or future generations.

3. The areas that fall under the Protected Areas Strategy (PAS) are not specifically part of the Deh Cho Land Use Planning Process, but they should be included. The communities of Trout Lake and Wrigley have essentially withdrawn from the planning process and shifted their focus to the PAS. It is much simpler, requires minimal negotiation, and the protected areas are unencumbered by size restrictions and land use plans. The PAS lands form a large part of the Deh Cho Territory. Once implemented, there will be permanent withdrawals that will effectively sterilize a huge part of the region, precluding any significant developments that would be beneficial to residents. This will be very satisfying to the environment groups in southern Canada, the USA and Europe but it will not be in the best interests of the Deh Cho.
4. Although there are only half a dozen mineral properties within the Deh Cho region, all have been placed within interim land withdrawals or protected areas. This is certainly not a coincidence. It was a deliberate attempt to curtail exploration activities. All of the holders of the mineral rights have been adversely impacted. Since it is virtually impossible to explore or develop a mineral property within a protected area, park, or other land reserve, the withdrawals were de facto expropriation of the mineral rights, without compensation; actions that would not be considered reasonable by any fair minded person. Also, by surrounding all of the pre-existing mineral concessions with withdrawal or protected areas, the perception has been created that the mineral holders are attempting to exploit both the environment and the residents of the Deh Cho. Because of the Land Use Process, explorers have been shoved into an adversarial position. Is it any wonder that the resource community appears less than supportive of this Process?

I believe that the Land Use Process should optimize the resource potential of the Deh Cho Territory, and take into account the economic future of the residents of the Deh Cho, the Northwest Territories and Canada, by providing a more flexible and open process and encouraging rather than stifling development. The focus to date has been exclusively on protection and preservation of an environment that is unthreatened and unlikely to ever be. Protectionism espoused by career environmentalists will not benefit the people of the Deh Cho, whereas well thought out policies of resource development would be highly beneficial.

Yours truly,



Eric Craigie