



GIANT MINE Oversight Board

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Mr. Matthew Spence

Regional Director General
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Mr. Bruce Cooper

Deputy Minister of Health
Department of Health and Social Services
Government of the Northwest Territories
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May 24, 2018

Arsenic-Contaminated Soils in Ndilo

On May 15, 2018 the Giant Mine Oversight Board (GMOB or the Board) hosted the semi-annual meeting of the Parties to the Giant Mine Remediation Project Environmental Agreement. The same evening, GMOB held its Annual Public Meeting. The issue of contaminated soils in Ndilo was raised and discussed at length on both occasions. Both times we were told that the issue has been brought to the attention of Federal and Territorial government representatives on numerous occasions, but that the request for signage, warning people of the contamination, is still to be addressed.

As you are aware, the issue of arsenic trioxide contaminated soils in the community of Ndilo has been a concern of its residents for some time. While it is known that there are "hotspots" of particularly high concentrations in the community, the location of these hotspots is not commonly known and people, especially children, may be inadvertently exposed to arsenic trioxide contamination. Residents have been asking for years that these hotspots be marked clearly so that they can be avoided, if not removed entirely.

While GMOB understands that jurisdictional responsibility for Ndilo is complex, the Board is concerned that the resulting impasse is preventing warning signage from being installed at key sites in Ndilo, allowing the potential exposure to contamination to continue. GMOB strongly recommends that your departments cooperate in placing warning signs at these spots as soon as possible, and then establish a plan to remediate these contaminated soils as appropriate.

GMOB supports the suggestion put forth at our Annual Public Meeting that the Department of Health provide the warning signs, based on those that it has installed elsewhere in the region, and that the department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs work together with the Ndilo Band Council to install those signs in affected areas.

I look forward to your immediate response in this regard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Racher', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Kathleen Racher
Chair, Giant Mine Oversight Board

Cc. Hon. Bob McLeod, Premier of the Northwest Territories
Chief Ernest Betsina, Ndilo NT
Chief Edward Sangris, Dettah NT