

Dear Minister Lang,

We refer to the proposed amendments to Yukon's Oil and Gas Act posted on your Department's website.

We consider that amendments of this nature to the Law in our Territory should be explained and debated in a public forum.

Since the comment period has been during the summer holidays, we ask you to consider extending the comment period into the fall. In particular, we ask that you hold information and discussion sessions for the public in Whitehorse and the communities, so that questions on the particulars of this complex topic can be answered without the public having to resort to booking meetings with your Department.

It appears that the amendments will give the oil and gas industry access to Yukon lands - public, private or unsettled - by removing the requirement for consent. This is unacceptable and we request that such enablement be removed from the amendments. The oil and gas industry should not be given rights to Yukon lands which places oil and gas interests above those of other land interests and owners.

Furthermore, it appears that the amendments will allow for oil and gas permits before land use planning is completed. We strongly oppose this as it totally undermines the land use planning process. We request that any amendment to this effect be deleted.

It seems that repealing the reference to Section 67 on environmental assessment will remove other important steps in the process. Any amendments to the current Act must retain all current environmental requirements and preferably update these to fit with today's requirements for protecting the environment.

I would like some explanation of what is being allowed under these amendments. For example, what does "surveys" and "examination of land" include?

We hope that you will schedule a public meeting at which these and other questions can be answered.

Thanking you.

Gill Cracknell & Jannik Schou  
Whitehorse