



October 9, 2020

Ms. Heather Bourassa, Chair  
Sahtu Land Use Planning Board  
PO Box 235  
Fort Good Hope, NT X0E 0H0  
Email: [chair@sahtulanduseplan.org](mailto:chair@sahtulanduseplan.org)

Dear Ms. Bourassa,

**Re: Amendment Application for Zone 65 in Sahtu Land Use Plan**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the process to review the future of the Zone 65 lands that were excluded from the final Ts'udé Nı́líné Tuyeta Protected Area boundary because of their high mineral potential.

Mineral resources are an important part of the NWT's economy today. To give you an idea of how strong the benefits are, diamond mining has created the following significant benefits over the past 24 years:

- Jobs – 65,856 person-years of employment, of which
  - 49% are northern; 51% southern; and 23% are Indigenous jobs
  - Currently there are over 1,500 northerners working annually at the mines
- Business – over \$23.4 Billion in business spending of which,
  - \$16.4 Billion is northern of which \$7.1 Billion is Indigenous business
  - One Indigenous company, the Yellowknives Dene's Det'on Cho Corporation, because of mining, directly employs about 220 employees and an additional 660 workers indirectly through other business partnerships;
- Community benefits – Well over \$200 Million to communities in Impact Benefit Agreement payments, scholarships, donations, & community wellness projects;
- Billions of dollars more in various taxes & royalties to public & Indigenous governments

The size of these large benefits explains why the minerals industry is the largest private sector contributor to the NWT economy.

Most of these benefits flow to the Tlicho and Akaitcho regions which contain much land with high mineral potential.

The Sahtu region also contains areas of very attractive mineral potential. However, the region is under-explored and has seen little mineral exploration investment for many, many years.

The Zone 65 lands are already known to have high mineral potential as they were examined by geologists from the NWT's Geological Survey as the protected area was being planned. These lands were excluded from the final Ts'udé Nı́łı́né Tuyeta Protected Area boundary so that they might provide the Sahtu and the NWT with future opportunities for mineral development and the benefits that can create. Given their high mineral potential, these Zone 65 lands could attract exploration investment and perhaps one day, support mineral development.

There are challenges, however.

Nobody knows where mineral deposits would be found on these lands. The area has also seen little, if any, previous mineral exploration to provide any hints. Money will need to be found to do the work. In addition, exploration and mining companies with the required knowledge are required. And perhaps most importantly, there needs to be a clear signal of support from the community and region that people want and will support mineral exploration and development.

If there is an interest from Sahtu residents and their Sahtu government and from the Government of the NWT to pursue mineral development in the region, then we recommend that you ensure the Zone 65 lands are zoned as being open to development. We also suggest that you reach out to the NWT Government and perhaps CanNor too, and seek the assistance you need to help attract explorers to the region, and also to prepare community and Sahtu residents for the opportunities these companies can provide when they arrive.

As with this Zone 65 process, we also provided similar thoughts on the Zone 41 lands, excluded from Naats'ihch'oh National Park because of their high mineral potential. That process is taking a long time to resolve and therefore, no investors have been able to come and explore those lands. We are hopeful that this Zone 65 process might move more quickly, and with everyone's support for zoning that would allow development, these lands could then attract investors to create opportunities for the Sahtu region.

We continue to believe that the Sahtu region could diversify and strengthen its economy with mineral exploration and mining. It is, after all, in the Sahtu where mining in the NWT began some 85 years ago. Rezoning and opening the Zone 65 lands – along with the Zone 41 lands – to responsible mineral development would strengthen the Sahtu region's ability to attract investors who can, with perseverance and support, provide new mineral development opportunities for the region. This could also add support to complete the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

In that regard, you may wish to ask Sahtu leadership to consider developing its own Sahtu Regional Mineral Strategy, similar to work that the Gwich'in completed earlier this

year, that could help build a minerals future for the residents of the region. I am led to believe that the NWT Government could still be supportive of assisting with this. In the meantime, we wish you much success with the Zone 65 process, and from our biased industry perspective, hope you open them to development.

Should you need any additional information on the minerals industry, and how we might help you, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. We would be pleased to provide any additional information you may require.

Yours truly,

**NWT & NUNAVUT CHAMBER OF MINES**



Tom Hoefler  
Executive Director

c.c.: Pamela Strand, Deputy Minister, GNWT – Industry, Tourism & Investment  
Sylvia Haener, Deputy Minister, GNWT – Lands  
Lisa Dyer, Director General, Cannon  
Melanie Harding, Executive Director, Sahtu Land Use Planning Board  
Heidi Wiebe, Project Manager, Sahtu Land Use Planning Board