



What's missing in *Mining Act* changes? The Right to Say NO *Proposed amendments do little to prevent conflicts*

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TORONTO – In response to proposed changes to Ontario's *Mining Act*, Mushkegowuk Council, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug and Ardoch Algonquin First Nation call on the province to respect the right of First Nations to say NO to all aspects of mining from prospecting to exploration to full mine development in their traditional territories. The First Nations clarify that the Ontario government must respect and adhere to Constitutional duty of consultation and accommodation and the internationally recognized right of free prior and informed consent. This has not been addressed by the proposed changes Minister Gravelle introduced on April 30, 2009.

"The Supreme Court of Canada has said that consultation and accommodation have to be meaningful. How can they be meaningful if we don't have the right to say NO to mining that will impact our lives and culture?" says Grand Chief Stan Louttit of the Mushkegowuk Council. The Mushkegowuk Council is comprised of seven communities including Attawapiskat, Fort Albany, Kashechewan, Moose Cree, New Post, Chapleau Cree and Missanabie Cree. Their homelands cover a vast area in and around James Bay of the Boreal Forest.

Changes to the *Act* were prompted in part by ongoing conflicts between mineral exploration companies and First Nations that resulted in the incarceration of Bob Lovelace and KI Six last year. "These amendments will not resolve the KI Platinex conflict. Further conflict is all but inevitable," says Sam McKay, Councillor and Spokesperson for Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI). Mr. McKay was one of *KI Six* who spent 68 days in jail.

"The proposed changes to the *Mining Act* are smoke and mirrors," says Mireille Lapointe, Co-Chief of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation. "They are meant to placate and silence dissent. Consultation without the right to say NO is meaningless and a cynical exercise," adds Chief Lapointe. Bob Lovelace of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation spent 101 days in jail for saying NO to uranium exploration.

The call for respect for free, prior and informed consent is widely supported including by seven public interest groups: CPAWS Wildlands League, Ecojustice Canada, Mining Watch Canada, Ontario Nature, Amnesty International Canada, Christian Peacemaker Teams Canada and Community Coalition Against Mining Uranium.

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