

Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

April 26, 2018

Calls for an Apology and Compensation related to the Operations of Giant Mine and its Effects on the Indigenous Peoples of the Region

Dear Prime Minister:

The Giant Mine Oversight Board (the Board) was created as a result of the Report of Environmental Assessment and Reasons for Decision: Giant Mine Remediation Project, EA 0809-001 (June 20, 2013) and the subsequent Giant Mine Remediation Project Environmental Agreement signed on June 9, 2015 by the Government of Canada (Minister for Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada), the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, the North Slave Métis Alliance, Alternatives North, and the City of Yellowknife. The Board began operations in late 2015.

In May 2017, the Board issued its first annual report which covered its 2015-2016 operations and included its recommendations related to the Giant Mine Remediation Project. In that report the Board noted the importance of reconciliation with the affected Indigenous peoples of the region, particularly in relation to the harm caused to them by the operations of the Giant Mine. That recommendation was followed in October 2017 by a unanimous motion by the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories calling upon the Government of Canada to make a formal apology to the Yellowknives Dene First Nation for the damage done by Giant Mine and that the Government of Canada enter negotiations with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation to provide compensation for these damages and loss. This motion was relayed to you in a letter dated January 18, 2018 from the Honorable Robert R. McLeod, Premier of the Northwest Territories.

Our Board has just released its report for 2017. Included in that report is a reiteration of its previous recommendation calling for an apology and compensation, as follows:

GMOB recommends that the Federal Government formally respond to requests of Indigenous groups for an apology and compensation related to the historic operations at the Giant Mine.

It is regrettable that it is necessary for the Board to repeat this recommendation given the importance of the issue, the Federal Government's commitment to reconciliation, and your personal interest in the matter. However, the absence of tangible progress on this issue leaves the Board with little alternative but to reiterate its concern and urge a substantive, meaningful, and timely response to the Board's recommendation, to the Government of the Northwest Territories' motion, and to the oft-raised requests of the Indigenous Peoples of the region for an apology and compensation.

On behalf of the Giant Mine Oversight Board, I thank you for your commitment to seeking reconciliation with the Indigenous Peoples of Canada, and for your interest in this particular matter. The Board looks forward to a positive response in the near future by the Government of Canada to the repeated calls for an apology and compensation related to the operations of the Giant Mine.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kathleen Racher
Chair, Giant Mine Oversight Board

Attachment

Cc. Member of Parliament for the Northwest Territories
Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, GNWT
Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Parties to the Giant Mine Oversight Body Society
Directors, Giant Mine Oversight Board