

Minister
of Natural Resources



Ministre
des Ressources naturelles

OCT 07 2014

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0E4

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Mr. Wade Luzny
Chief Executive Officer and Executive Vice-President
Canadian Wildlife Federation
350 Michael Cowpland Drive
Kanata, Ontario K2M 2W1

Dear Mr. Luzny:

Thank you for your letter of August 22, 2014, expressing your concerns about the recent tailings dam failure at the Imperial Metals Corporation's Mount Polley Mine in British Columbia.

Natural resources play a significant role in the Canadian economy by providing jobs and economic opportunities for people in communities across the country. Through our plan for Responsible Resource Development, our government has strengthened environmental protection by improving enforcement and compliance mechanisms. For example, enforceability conditions have been introduced into environmental assessment decision statements and financial penalties to address contraventions to environmental laws have been significantly improved.

Provinces and territories are responsible for the management of natural resources and the regulation of mining activities on publicly owned lands. This includes: exploration; development and extraction of mineral resources; and the construction, conservation, management, reclamation and close-out of mine sites. As the Mount Polley tailings dam failure is a matter of provincial jurisdiction, the Government of British Columbia is leading the efforts to address the incident and investigate the cause of the breach.

From a federal perspective, Environment Canada has opened an investigation and is currently assessing the Mount Polley incident with respect to federal environmental and wildlife laws within its jurisdiction. I have taken the liberty of forwarding your correspondence to the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of the Environment, who is responsible for issues related to water, wildlife safeguards and environmental management standards.

Canada

While Natural Resources Canada does not have a regulatory role with respect to tailings, we do undertake scientific and technical research to better understand and mitigate the environmental impacts of mine tailings. The department also encourages industry to adopt responsible tailings management practices that will reduce the risk of future incidents and maintain confidence in the safe operation of tailings management facilities.

The Government of Canada remains committed to maintaining the highest possible standards for protecting the environment and promoting the responsible development of our natural resources.

Again, thank you for sharing your concerns on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Greg Rickford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "R".

The Honourable Greg Rickford, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the
Federal Economic Development Initiative for
Northern Ontario

c.c.: The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, P.C., M.P.
Minister of the Environment