

OCT 15 2014

Minister of the Environment



Ministre de l'Environnement

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H3

OCT 09 2014

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

Dear Mr. Luzny:

Thank you for your letter of August 22, 2014, conveying the Canadian Wildlife Federation's concerns about the potential environmental impacts of the Imperial Metals' Mount Polley Mine tailings pond breach. I regret the delay in responding.

The Government of Canada is also concerned about this issue. Environment Canada continues to provide scientific expertise and advice to the British Columbia (BC) Ministry of Environment and the BC Ministry of Energy and Mines, the lead agencies in charge of the response to the breach. This support will remain available to the Province as it continues to develop both short- and long-term plans for further water quality and sediment testing.

Environment Canada shares the concerns that have arisen as a result of the Mount Polley incident. The Department carefully reviews all proposals for the development of waste storage facilities at proposed new mines. This work, undertaken during the environmental assessment of mining projects, includes an analysis of proposed project designs, as per recommendations set out in the Department's *Environmental Code of Practice for Metal Mines*, including those relating to the planning, construction, operation, and decommissioning of waste rock and tailings disposal areas. The Department also determines the adequacy of the proposed facilities to meet the requirements of the *Metal Mining Effluent Regulations*, which specify the limits of deleterious substances that can be released into waters frequented by fish and which prohibit the deposit of effluent that is lethal to fish.

Our government is committed to protecting the environment. Environment Canada is currently assessing the Mount Polley incident with respect to the federal environmental and wildlife laws that it administers, including the pollution prevention provisions of the *Fisheries Act*. The Department has opened an investigation and is working jointly with the BC Ministry of Environment, the BC Conservation Officer Service, and the BC Major Investigation Unit.

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Environment Canada takes its enforcement role very seriously and, if a violation is found, enforcement action will be taken in accordance with the *Compliance and Enforcement Policy for the Habitat Protection and Pollution Prevention Provisions of the Fisheries Act*.

I appreciate having had this opportunity to respond to your concerns. Please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Leona Aglukkaq', is written in a cursive style.

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