



VCS → ~~Interim Plateau~~ 1994
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Driftpile

July 6, 1994

Honourable Anne Edwards
Minister of Energy, Mines,
and Petroleum Resources
Government Buildings
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 1X4

Dear Ms. Edwards

Your ministry's recent efforts to encourage exploration and mining in British Columbia are to be commended. A measure of our industry's level of interest will probably be reflected in the applications to the "Explore B.C." initiative.

There are, however, recent events with respect to permitting and land use planning which have affected Teck's enthusiasm for continued mineral exploration in B.C. These events could also impact many other mining and exploration companies.

Teck is spending over \$1,000,000 this year on exploration programs for zinc and lead in the Kechika Mountains of northeast B.C. The permitting process has been a nightmare;

- On February 7 and 8, 1994 Teck submitted its Notices of Work for the Driftpile and Gataga Properties.

- On March 8, M.E.M.P.R. responded that "your Notice of Work is now being circulated to all concerned resource agencies for a thirty day referral. If found satisfactory, approval for work to begin will be forwarded by mail from this office in approximately thirty days from the date of this letter".

- On April 11 we received written approval from the M.E.M.P.R. for work on both the Driftpile and Gataga properties; "your work proposal has been reviewed by all concerned agencies and has been approved for the period June 1, 1994 to August 31, 1994, as outlined in your Notice of Work dated February 8, 1994". Although this was roughly 60 days after our submittal, it still allowed time to finalize arrangements for the year. After receiving written approval from your ministry, Teck undertook several legal obligations including substantial drilling and helicopter contracts.

◦ On May 25, only 7 days before the start of the program, we received a copy of a memo dated May 9 from the Ministry of Environment to the M.E.M.P.R. stating "this program raises some environmental concerns" and "we would be prepared to review their proposal"! We received this notice 105 days after our original submittal, and 44 days after written approval from your ministry!

◦ On June 1 a meeting was held in Fort St. John to clarify some of the aspects of the program. Present at the meeting were officials from M.E.M.P.R. (David Pow) and Ministry of Environment, Fish and Wildlife Branch (John Elliot). It was agreed a site visit by the Ministry of Environment may help negate some of the concerns.

◦ On June 22 John Elliot of the Ministry of Environment visited the property and gave his "approval" to proceed. This is now 72 days after written approval from M.E.M.P.R.!

◦ On July 5, less than 2 weeks since the last visit, John Elliot returned to the property, informed us that we were now operating in a "restricted access area" as of one week ago, and required that we purchase an additional permit to operate our two all terrain vehicles.

With regards to this entire affair, I would appreciate answers to the following;

1. Why is a ministry allowed to potentially derail a program after your ministry has issued written approval? The approval clearly states that the "proposal has been reviewed by all concerned agencies and has been approved!"
2. What happened to the "one window " permitting process? Coordination between the various government ministries appears non-existent. Various government people continually complain that the notices aren't sent to the right people. As required, we send all correspondence to your ministry for distribution to "all concerned parties". Government officials complain that "district managers, regional managers, or field managers" are not informed. Who's making the decisions in the other ministries and why can't they sign off within the allotted 30 day period?
3. Why was there no correspondence regarding a change in the land use status to "restricted access area"? We are a very interested and involved stakeholder in the area yet not a single government ministry contacted us. What happened to the principle of consultation wherever possible? And finally,
4. How can the industry as a whole be assured that major exploration efforts, once approved, will not undergo weekly or monthly reviews by other ministries?

I would appreciate direct responses to all of the above questions and any additional comments you may have with regard to these incidents.

On another matter, it has come to my attention that the "Vanderhoof L.R.M.P.", in its June 6 project update (copy attached) is proposing 5 large areas for "protected area status" (pages 4-8). Of interest is the fact that the list of people on the committee (page 1) does not include a representative member from the M.E.M.P.R.

Apparently Ministry of Forests, B.C. Lands, B.C. Environment, and Department of Fisheries and Oceans are all represented.

In reading through the descriptions of the proposed protected areas there is not a single reference to known mineral resources, mineral potential, or existing mineral tenure. Having participated in both the West Kootenay C.O.R.E. table and the Kamloops L.R.M.P. where mineral resource information was consistently distributed, I find this particular situation very disconcerting. The involvement of your ministry at these land use meetings, wherever they are in the province, is crucial.

Is there a representative from the M.E.M.P.R. at these meetings and could you please forward his/her phone number.

I cannot over emphasize the importance of land use planning and the permitting process on the industry and, from several of your comments, I think you appreciate the extreme level of concern within the industry when the various events described above continue to occur.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours truly,



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Western Canada, Alaska

cc. W. Meyer; President, Teck Exploration Ltd.
G. Livingstone; President, Mining Assoc. of B.C.
J. Patterson; Managing Director, B.C.-Yukon Chamber of Mines