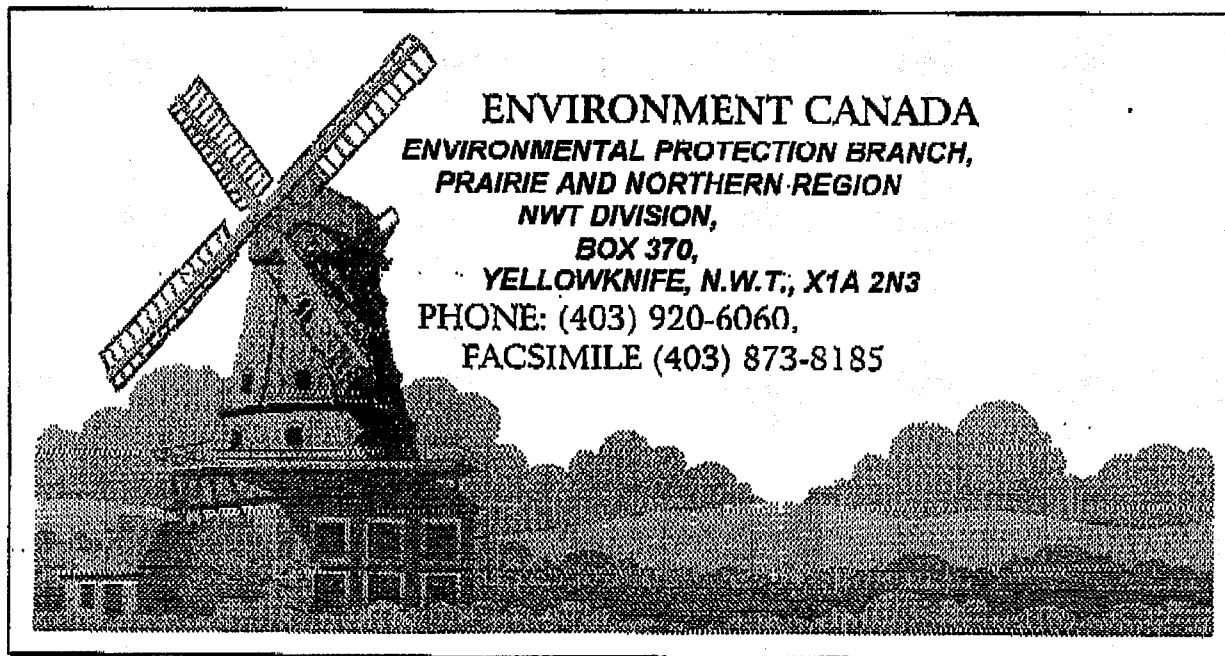


FAX MESSAGE

TO: Dave AnthonyTELEPHONE: _____ Fax No. 873-2914FROM: Laura JohnstonCOMMENTS: Sorry for the delay. Any comments?
Laura JohnstonNUMBER OF PAGES 3 (including header) 3 (short) _____ (long)DATE: Sept 22/95

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gib statement
Preamble from Joe M. Querry
DRAFT STATEMENT ON GIANT MINE AIR EMISSIONS

Air pollution from the Giant mine is a well known local environmental and human health concern for the people of Yellowknife. Every day 20-30 kg. of arsenic--a proven human carcinogen--is released into Yellowknife's environment by Royal Oak Mines, the owner of the Giant mine. No levels of arsenic in the air we breath, have been proven safe. Sulphur dioxide emissions amount to 50-65 tonnes per day. By comparison, the Jacklin Lake Power Plant emits about 30 tonnes of sulphur dioxide a year. The Giant mine is the major source of these pollutants as all other sources contribute only a minuscule amount to the levels detected in downtown Yellowknife. This cannot continue, but stopping it requires action by both government and industry. This includes the City of Yellowknife. It is incumbent on this Council to take a position on this issue and to take whatever action is necessary to bring an end to this pollution.

In April 1991 two residents of Yellowknife asked the Minister of Renewable Resources to conduct an investigation into the environmental and human health implications of the emissions from the Giant mine, and to examine options to reduce these emissions. The resulting report issued in June 1993 did little more than measure the emissions from the Giant stack and concluded that trees up to 5 km away are being damaged.

An assessment of this report by Health and Welfare Canada found that recorded sulphur dioxide emissions did not constitute "an imminent health hazard". On the other hand, this assessment recommended "exposure [to arsenic] should be reduced to the lowest possible level". There were no federal or territorial air quality regulations up to this point. GNWT remedied this, in part, by adopting air quality "guidelines" for sulphur dioxide and dust in June 1994. Unfortunately these "guidelines" are neither legally binding nor enforceable. There are still no federal or territorial guidelines or regulations for arsenic.

Last month GNWT released a computer modelling study to explain the levels of arsenic and sulphur dioxide recorded at a downtown monitoring station and to provide a planning tool to assess pollution reduction measures. The report shows that the sulphur dioxide emissions from the Giant mine would have to be reduced 90-95% to meet the current "guidelines". Raising its stack or altering the velocity or heat of the emissions will not suffice. In short, dilution or dispersion will not work if the guidelines are to be

taken seriously.

A large settlement over the Windy Craggy mine was recently announced between the government of British Columbia and Royal Oak Mines. Yellowknifers should expect that the company will now invest a sizable portion of the \$104 million windfall profit into technology to eliminate the air emissions from the Giant Mine.

The Canadian Arctic Resources Committee and others have suggested that a clear principle--zero discharge--must form the basis of action by government and industry to protect the health and environment of Yellowknife and its residents.

Dilution or dispersion has been rejected as an industrial pollution control option in most places in southern Canada. Scrubbers to remove sulphur dioxide or an autoclave to completely eliminate air emissions, must be considered by Royal Oak. Other mines in Canada have already installed this technology. Royal Oak must not have a free ride by unloading its environmental costs on the citizens of Yellowknife. For its part, GNWT should take the initiative to adopt legally-binding emission standards. The House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development recently recommended that federal authorities finalize a strategy on arsenic emissions before December of this year.

What steps should the City take? We should formally endorse and adopt the principle of zero discharge as a goal to end air pollution from industrial sources where known technology can easily be applied; such as the Giant mine. The City must take a firm position on the air emissions from the Giant mine and should strongly encourage the territorial government and the company to adopt a similar approach. I will be presenting a motion later this evening on this issue for the consideration of this Council.