



November 20, 2016

Hon. Catherine McKenna
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
200 Sacré-Coeur Boul., 2nd Floor
Gatineau, QC K1A 0H3

Hon. Carolyn Bennett
Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs
Les Terrasses de la Chaudière North Tower
10 Wellington Street
Gatineau, QC K1A 0H4

Federal Review of Environmental Assessment Processes

Dear Ministers:

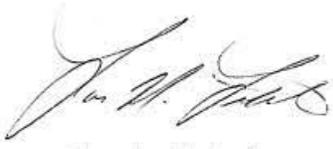
Last summer, the federal government announced a review of its environmental assessment processes through a review process led by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. The announcement said that an expert panel would engage broadly with Canadians, Indigenous groups, and key stakeholders and develop recommendations to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change for restoring public confidence in environmental assessment processes. Details have since been announced on the members of the expert panel, its terms of reference, and on the beginning of national consultations. The north remains excluded from these consultations, even though environmental assessment and review processes remain locked within federal control in the Northwest Territories.

The terms of reference for the review note that " Given that the territories have distinct and effective environmental assessment regimes rooted in constitutionally-protected land claim agreements with specific mechanisms for consultation and public participation, matters related to northern environmental assessment regimes will not be reviewed by the Panel...the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs intends to launch a process soon to work with all applicable First Nations and the territorial government in Northwest Territories to identify possible solutions related to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. It is still not clear how the federal government is going to approach our environmental assessment process in the Mackenzie Valley, including building a participant funding program other Canadians south of 60 are entitled to access."

The Council of Canadians NWT Chapter is very concerned with the continued exclusion of northern Canadians from the consultation process and opportunities being made available to southern Canadians. While a specific consultation and review on the regeneration of northern environmental assessment processes is desirable, the national review should not exclude the opportunity for northerners to contribute to the renewal and improvement of national environmental assessment processes. Also, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada has yet to announce on any process for the consultation, review and restoration of environmental protections under not only the MVRMA or under other federal legislation gutted by the previous government, such as the *Fisheries Act*, *Navigable Waters Protection Act* and *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.

The Council of Canadians NWT Chapter calls on you jointly to include the Northwest Territories in the upcoming national Review of Environmental Assessment Processes, and to collaborate in bringing forward the promised review of northern processes. Full provision for funding of public participant groups should be included in these arrangement.

I look forward to your positive reply to how northern Canadians will be included in national consultations on the restoration and improvement of environmental assessment and protection processes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lois Little". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L".

Lois Little
Co-Chair
Council of Canadians NWT Chapter

cc. Wally Schumann, NWT Minister of Environment and Natural Resources