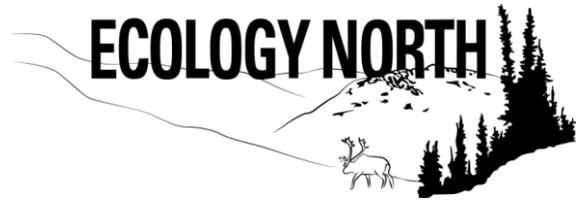




Alternatives North



Part 4 Bill C-15: MVRMA revisions

Introduction: Christine Wenman, representing Ecology North

- Grass-roots non-profit and Canadian Registered Charity
- Created in 1971 to respond to public concerns about arsenic contamination from Giant Mine
- Has since grown to include 6 staff members in Yellowknife and Hay River, with a mandate of bringing people and knowledge together for a health Northern Environment
- Serves all NWT communities in wide ranging environmental planning and education initiatives from waste management, climate change adaptation planning and source water protection
- Has worked with collaborating environmental, social and Aboriginal organizations for several years now to encourage decision-makers to *complete* rather than *dismantle* the northern environmental management regime

Introduction: Karen Hamre, representing Alternatives North

- Social justice coalition; membership includes organizations and individuals across the NWT;
- Coalition has representatives of churches, labour unions, environmental organizations, women and family advocates and anti-poverty groups; individuals are important participants.
- An entirely volunteer organization
- Broad definition of social justice, including the environment and future generations, so concerns are broad.
- Members and member organizations want to participate in resource development in a way that contributes to the overall health of our communities and safeguards our environment
- So we believe in completing and maintaining a strong northern regulatory process

Christine:

Three points for the Committee:

1. **Uncouple Part 4 from the rest of the Bill.** Parliament needs to vote on this separately from the devolution sections of the Bill. People can be fully in support of devolution, but not in support of section 4 for several reasons, such as:
 - Part 4 is not in keeping with the spirit of devolution
 - We don't believe it will help the regulatory system be more effective, efficient or equitable as there is no evidence to suggest it
 - There is very little consent on this section of the Bill, which detracts from the efforts to create the proper conditions for economic growth, jobs, and long-term prosperity in the NWT

2. **Part 4 needs to be amended**, whether or not it is uncoupled from the rest of the Bill
 - a. **No dismantling of the regional Land and Water Boards**
 - The integrated co-management system we have now works *in the regions where land claims are settled*
 - The current system can effectively fulfill the integrated co-management responsibilities intended in writing the Act
 - Eliminating the regional boards/panels will create more challenges than it will solve, such as possibly leaving only two people with a decision on a development
 - If this also leads to closing regional board offices, it diminishes regional access to board services, diminishes board liaison in the regions, and creates a communication and relationship gap between people and decision-makers.
 - In other words, this isn't a fix.

 - b. **No to increasing federal or ministerial authority**
 - Diminishes the Boards' authorities
 - For example, timelines should be under the Boards' authority, not the Minister's authority
 - Decreases the quasi-judicial role of the Boards – politicizes regulatory decision making
 - The increase in federal or Ministerial authority diminishes co-management principles, which are quite fundamental to the whole regulatory process and fundamental to land claim agreements

3. For a more effective, efficient and equitable regulatory system, take **action on the recommendations of the 2005 and 2010 MVRMA audits**
- These audits are a mechanism in the legislation
 - They are done in a comprehensive manner
 - Little to no progress has been made on many of the key audit recommendations and the federal government has never issued a formal response
 - Unlike some of the changes proposed in Bill-C15, such as deleting regional panels, the recommendations in the audit are based on empirical evidence
 - They show how to improve the overall land management in the NWT

Karen: thank you for your time, and we are open to questions on these points or our written brief