



## **Media Release**

### **Alternatives North, Ecology North Jointly Present Opposition to Bill C-15 Part 4**

Yellowknife January 27, 2014

In joint testimony before the Parliamentary Committee holding hearings on Bill C-15, Alternatives North and Ecology North opposed some of the key Part 4 changes proposed for the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (MVRMA)* and called for Part 4 of the bill to be dealt with separately from the devolution legislation.

Karen Hamre of Alternatives North and Christine Wenman of Ecology North delivered the submission today at the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Committee hearing in Yellowknife.

The joint submission calls for the Part 4 changes to be uncoupled from Bill C-15, since they are not in keeping with the spirit of devolution, will not make the regulatory system more effective, efficient or equitable, and because there is little consensus on that part of the Bill.

If the Part 4 proposals are not uncoupled, Ecology North and Alternatives North say there should be no dismantling of the regional land and water boards, which would create centralized authority convenient to Yellowknife and southern companies, but would be lacking regional accessibility, accountability, or perspectives. Proposed increases in federal and/or territorial ministerial authority diminish the authority of the boards and erode principles of co-management fundamental to regulatory processes and land claims agreements, the groups say.

"An effective, efficient and equitable regulatory system can be achieved by taking action on the recommendations of the 2005 and 2010 *MVRMA* audits, which have contained clear, consistent and largely ignored recommendations for improving environmental management in the NWT," says Ms. Wenman.

"We strongly believe that those amendments associated with board and panel restructuring, increased Ministerial authority, and direct federal involvement in the timing of environmental assessments and regulatory processes will be counter-productive for Aboriginal governments, claimant groups, industry, and the general public," Ms. Hamre says.

Copies of the joint Brief to the Standing Committee and speaking remarks are attached.

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