

# Canada, GNWT Agree to Cooperate on Giant Mine Remediation Project

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*YELLOWKNIFE (March 15, 2005)* - The Governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories (NWT) today signed a Cooperation Agreement on the management and remediation of the Giant Mine site.

The Honourable Andy Scott, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) and Federal Interlocutor for Metis and Non-Status Indians, and the Honourable Brendan Bell, Northwest Territories Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, signed the agreement in Yellowknife today.

“The signing of this cooperation agreement is a major milestone as we move toward remediating Giant Mine. It recognizes the importance of working together to address the surface and underground aspects of the site and all of the related issues,” said Minister Scott. “I’m confident that NWT residents will appreciate the progress that this agreement represents.”

“It is in the interests of all Northwest Territories residents that our governments cooperate and coordinate our actions to achieve a cost-effective and timely remediation of the Giant Mine site,” said Minister Bell. “This agreement will allow us to effectively deal with the toxic inheritance left by the Giant Mine and to protect human health and ensure public safety.”

The Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Member of Parliament for Western Arctic and Minister of State (Northern Development), also attended the signing event.

“As a Northerner myself, as well as a representative of the North, I am greatly encouraged by this agreement to cooperate on such a significant issue,” said Minister Blondin-Andrew. “Giant Mine is of great concern to the people who live here, and they want to see the remediation project move forward as efficiently and effectively as possible.”

Under the agreement, the two governments will immediately begin to work together on the remediation of Giant Mine. An Interim Office under the DIAND management will be established to implement an effective care and maintenance plan for the site and finalize a cost-effective remediation plan.

An oversight committee will be established to oversee the Cooperation Agreement, and provide general direction to the Interim Office. The committee will have equal federal and territorial representation and report to the Ministers of each government.

Both governments agree that underground freezing is the preferred option for addressing the arsenic trioxide dust stored underground at Giant Mine. Canada

acknowledges long-term responsibility for the arsenic trioxide dust stored underground. The GNWT will provide \$23 million as its contribution to the care and maintenance and surface remediation at Giant Mine.

Jurisdictional responsibilities and liabilities are not affected by this agreement, which covers Giant Mine only. It does not establish a precedent for any other contaminated sites on Commissioner's land in the NWT.

This news release and accompanying backgrounder are also available in electronic format at [www.inac.gc.ca](http://www.inac.gc.ca)

For more information, please contact:

Mr. Lorne Tricoteux  
Associate Regional Director General  
Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development  
Tel: (867) 669-2500Mr.

Peter Vician  
Deputy Minister Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development  
Government of the Northwest Territories  
Phone: (867) 920-8048