



Jamie West

Member of Provincial Parliament, Sudbury
Député provincial, Sudbury

August 12 2019

Honourable Greg Rickford
Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines
Whitney Block, 5th Floor, Room 5630
99 Wellesley St. W
Toronto, ON M7A 1W1

Dear Minister Rickford,

I am writing to raise my concerns regarding the current make-up of the government's new mining group. I recommend that you immediately take steps to increase the diversity of perspectives in the mining group, by including worker representatives, labour organizations, and Indigenous community leaders as members.

On March 4th, you announced members of the new mining working group at the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) annual mining convention and reiterated the group's importance in the budget announcement on April 11th. I was surprised to see that the group is predominantly composed of directors, vice presidents, and CEOs of mining and business organizations from Ontario and international corporations. There are no worker or labour representatives, and only one Indigenous community leader listed as members of the group. The exclusion of these stakeholders from the mining working group is a grave omission. Without their input the group will not be able to make constructive recommendations that take into account the needs of the stakeholders who are essential to building the industry's strength.

Before becoming an MPP, I worked as a health and safety representative at the Copper Cliff smelter in Sudbury. Through this work, I learned that the best decisions emerge when management, workers, community leaders, and government all work together.

The people working on the ground in the mines and smelters are keenly aware of the challenges associated with work in the mining industry. The labour organizations who represent these workers at the bargaining table also bring a strong knowledge of work in the mining industry, including occupational health and safety. If Ontario is going to become a leader in mining, it needs to be a leader when it comes to safety in mining.

I was also disappointed to see that there is only one Indigenous representative in the group. A commitment to reconciliation demands good faith and action to build meaningful government-to-government relationships with Indigenous Peoples in Ontario. Only when Indigenous leaders are included at the decision making table can we have truly meaningful conversations about the implementation of resource revenue sharing agreements, building infrastructure to remote communities, and the creation of long term employment in the mining industry.

These stakeholders are invested in building the resiliency of the mining industry. They not only deserve a seat at the table – their input is crucial to all discussions about the industry's future.

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I share your interest in seeing things move on important mining initiatives in Ontario. Strengthening the mining industry in this province benefits all Ontarians by boosting job creation and stimulating the provincial economy. I believe that Ontario can have a prosperous, sustainable, and safe mining industry. But to achieve this goal we need to make sure that the stakeholders who contribute to this industry are at the decision making table. I urge you to reassess the current membership of the mining group and ensure that worker, labour and Ingenious community representatives are given meaningful roles in these discussions and future meetings about the future of the mining industry in Ontario.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Jamie West
MPP for Sudbury

CC.

MPP Mike Mantha

MPP for Algoma—Manitoulin

Official Opposition Critic for Northern Development and Mines

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