



# WILDLANDS LEAGUE

*A chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society*

## **Mining Amendment Act Passes**

### **Will changes to the law mean an end to ugly land confrontations and costly court battles?**

**Toronto, October 22, 2009** - CPAWS Wildlands League, a public interest group, welcomes the changes to dispute resolution in the *Mining Act* today as put forward in *An Act to Amend the Mining Act, 2009* which passed Third Reading in the legislature.

The group says the changes introduced are significant. They could, if the Bill receives Royal Assent, help prevent future conflicts, avoid costly court battles and prevent bad actors from forcing on-the-land confrontations with communities when conflicts arise. Here are some of the changes:

- individuals or the body set out to hear and consider the dispute will report back to the Minister not the ministry;
- the Minister's powers are further clarified and he or she may confirm, vary or rescind a Director's decision with respect to an exploration permit;
- Minister shall provide written notice of his/her decision to the parties; and,
- while a dispute is underway, no exploration activities are permitted.

"These changes make sense for the public interest," says Janet Sumner, Executive Director of CPAWS Wildlands League. "Mineral exploration companies won't be permitted to go forward once dispute resolution kicks in. This will prevent some of the ugly confrontation scenarios we've seen in the past."

"Equally important and not to be missed, is that the Minister will be able to rescind a Director's decision on an exploration permit if warranted," says Anna Baggio, Director of Conservation Land Use Planning for the group. "This means that exploration will no longer be a foregone conclusion," Baggio adds. These changes are consistent with modern day values, the group states. It also gives further incentive to companies to negotiate in good faith with communities and to ensure respectful relations.

While the group applauds the innovation surrounding dispute resolution, action on other areas remains outstanding, such as on free, prior and informed consent of Aboriginal communities and

the lack of proper environmental assessment for the cumulative impacts of mining projects.

"We will continue to push for the full suite of policy changes needed to the mining regime in Ontario, including consent and full Environmental Assessments for mining projects. In the meantime, it's important to acknowledge progress being made (on dispute resolution), especially when it's in the public interest," said Sumner.

CPAWS Wildlands League has been drawing public attention to inadequacies and the antiquated nature of the Mining Act since 2005.

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