

WORKING TO DEFEAT



ON-RESERVE POVERTY

April 26, 2021

Coal Policy Engagement Committee  
c/o Government of Alberta  
Department of Energy  
Edmonton Alberta CODE  
Attn: Mr. Ron Wallace, Chair

Via email: [energy.coalpolicy@gov.ab.ca](mailto:energy.coalpolicy@gov.ab.ca)

Dear Mr. Wallace,

**Re: Coal Policy Engagement**

I am writing to you on behalf of the National Coalition of Chiefs to express our support for metallurgical coal mining in Alberta.

The National Coalition of Chiefs (NCC) was established in 2017 with a mandate to defeat on-reserve poverty through Indigenous participation in Canada's natural resource industry. The NCC provides a forum for pro-development Chiefs to communicate the positive side of resource development while advocating for policies that pave the way for more Indigenous involvement in the industry, as employees, contractors, partners and owners.

While the coal engagement process is welcome, there are many considerations that require careful deliberation. Among these considerations are:

- Modern mining practices are proposed by new industry proponents and are not the same as the legacy mining practices that have contributed to environmental concerns elsewhere;
- Land categories are central to the 1976 Coal Policy but a new, modern coal policy must acknowledge that extensive environmental legislation currently exists to protect air quality, water quality and water quantity. The committee must ensure these existing, stringent environmental protections are understood by all participants and that the guidance under a new, modern coal policy acknowledges that all metallurgical coal projects would be subject to intense scrutiny, regardless of land category.

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- Alberta's foothills are not Alberta's Rocky Mountains. The committee must ensure clear definitions of, and a common understanding for, mining methods and how responsible surface mining progressively rehabilitates and leaves landforms that can be used by the many generations to come
- Economic opportunity is more than just royalties. Significant annual operating costs associated with these projects flow directly to local service providers while taxation (whether property or income related) support local, provincial, and national budgets. Indigenous communities are both direct and indirect beneficiaries of these opportunities in the form of long-term employment, training, business opportunities and community investment.

We know, and have experienced, that there are activist groups that will use any legal tool they can to stop any kind of resource development, be it forestry, hydro, mining or oil and gas, and I fully anticipate that your committee will hear these perspectives. We encourage the committee to receive this feedback, but to also ensure a balanced discussion, including recognition of the above considerations.

First Nations are self-determining nations who require a functioning economy in order to exercise their sovereignty. As entrepreneurs, workers and business men and women, we trust that you understand that Indigenous peoples intend to be project proponents in the future: owners and equity stakeholders that need to go out and attract our own investment, be competitive, and have clear and predictable processes in order to do so.

As such, the choice here isn't between whether or not coal mining should be allowed in certain areas of the province. It is about ensuring that environmentally responsible resource projects have the framework and certainty to proceed so that Indigenous people can participate in the associated economic opportunities, while ensuring the protection of the environment for generations to come.

We look forward to continuing this conversation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dale Swampy".

Dale Swampy  
President, National Coalition of Chiefs

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