



Government of
Northwest Territories

March 07, 2023

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P.
Minister, Environment and Climate Change
Government of Canada
House of Commons
OTTAWA ON K1A 0A6
ec.ministre-minister.ec@canada.ca

Dear Minister Guilbeault:

INFORMATION SHARING AND NOTIFICATION: SPILLS AT KEARL MINE SITE

On March 1, 2023 I was advised by an Indigenous government that there has been seepage from Imperial Oil's Kearl Oil Sands Mine Site since at least May 2022 and that a spill of approximately 5.3 million litres occurred in early February 2023. The GNWT has yet to receive formal notification of this spill.

As I have conveyed previously, the waters of the Mackenzie River Basin are of significant environmental, economic, cultural and spiritual importance, in particular for the Dene, Métis and Inuvialuit peoples in the Basin who rely on the land and water. This importance holds especially true for the Northwest Territories (NWT), which is the ultimate downstream jurisdiction of the Basin. When residents, and in particular Dene, Métis and Inuvialuit peoples of the NWT hear about spills from the oil sands region, they are very concerned and trust in government, ours included, is further eroded. Information sharing between governments, rather than through media or third parties, helps mitigate and collaboratively address the concerns of residents. I would appreciate it if you could reinforce the importance of this information sharing both within your government and with our shared government partners.

This failure in information transparency comes at a time when both Canada and the Government of Alberta are asking for cooperation from the NWT as they work towards regulations to allow the release of treated oil sands tailings effluent into the environment. Important issues like these require trust, and there is no denying the trust of Indigenous governments, community leaders, and residents has been affected by this lack of transparency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shane Thompson'.

Shane Thompson
Minister
Environment and Natural Resources

c. Distribution List

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