



September 29, 2021

Via Email

Minister Nils Clarke
Department of Environment
Government of Yukon
PO Box 2703
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6

Dear Minister Clarke,

RE: Engagement on the Draft Yukon Wetlands Policy

We write you today to express our collective concern regarding the proposed engagement period timeline for the draft Wetlands Policy for Yukon.

As per Manon Moreau's letter dated September 15, 2021, we understand that Government of Yukon has recently revised the draft Wetlands Policy based on feedback from the roundtable participants, and that the draft policy is now ready for public review. While Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (TH), Na-Cho Nyäk Dun (NND), and Vuntut Gwitchin (VG) are pleased to see work on this important policy progressing, we feel the proposed engagement timeline on the policy from October 4th to November 4th is ill considered and inadequate.

As you know, the Dawson Regional Planning Commission (DRPC) released its draft land use plan in June of 2021. We have been united in our collective interest to see collaborative land use plans developed and implemented within our Traditional Territories as per the objectives of our Final Agreements, which includes the need for adequate opportunity for public participation. The Commission is currently engaging with members of the public, stakeholders, and within our communities on the draft plan until November 1st, 2021, with many events planned over the month of October. The proposed engagement period for the draft Wetlands Policy, therefore, overlaps with a key engagement period for the Dawson Regional Planning Commission.

TH, NND and VG are of the opinion that this overlap will lead to confusion and fatigue on behalf of the public, as well as an overall lack of involvement in either process. Furthermore, our Governments simply do not have the capacity to support our citizens in engaging on both of these important processes at the same time.

Wetlands remain a significant value to us by providing critical ecological services and functions, are irreplaceable habitat for fish and wildlife, and support our ways of life and our cultures. It is paramount that our citizens have the opportunity to review the draft Wetlands Policy and to share their perspectives on it through public engagement. As Governments, we have long expressed that continued industrial

development within wetlands in our traditional territories is undermining our Final Agreement rights and impacting our relationship with the land.

We believe that both a complete Dawson Regional Land Use Plan and a final Yukon Wetlands Policy will have significant, long lasting, and hopefully positive, impacts on our lands. However, we also believe overlapping these two critical engagement periods will not provide adequate opportunities for our citizens to share their concerns on either draft document.

We hereby request that you delay the commencement of the proposed Wetlands Policy engagement for one month. We would also like to request that the Government of Yukon consider an extension to their proposed 30 day engagement period for the draft Wetlands Policy such that members of the public have adequate opportunity to participate. This will enable our communities, and others, to meaningfully participate in the development of the Wetlands Policy without detracting from our ability to participate in the Dawson regional land use planning process.

We believe this will benefit all Governments in Yukon, all Boards and Committees created through our Final Agreements, and all members of the public who want to provide input into wetland management in the Yukon.

Please direct any questions you may have to Katie Fraser, Natural Resources Policy Advisor, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Adrienne Hill, Manager of Implementation and Governance, Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, or Erika Tizya, Director of Natural Resources, Vuntut Gwitchin.

Thank you and we look forward to your response,

Sincerely,



Roberta Joseph
Chief, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in



Simon Mervyn
Chief, Na-Cho Nyäk Dun



Dana Tizya-Tramm
Chief, Vuntut Gwitchin

cc Yukon First Nations
Dawson Regional Planning Commission
Yukon Land Use Planning Council
Dawson District Renewable Resource Council
Yukon Fish & Wildlife Management Board
Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee
Manon Moreau, Deputy Minister of Environment