

## Sam Hunter - Natural Resources Monitor

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Impact Agency of Canada

### **RE: Draft Agreement to conduct a Regional Assessment in the Ring of Fire Area**

To whom it may concern,

Enclosed are comments and frustrations from myself, a father, grandfather as I live in a society, region where policy is thrown at our people and subjected to live under the Indian act and restrictive colonial guidelines.

These practices are self serving, self protecting. Exploitation continues to trend and not only damage the landscape but also to indigenous lives. We live in an oil age, oil reservoirs tell us that we are now going downhill. In just 100 years, we have diminished more than half the worlds supply of fossil fuels while contributing to the speeding up of global warming/climate change. As an Indigenous person who still utilizes the land for a way of life, our balance and cycle of life with nature has surely been disrupted. In short, Environmental Assessments, mitigation processes are merely mechanisms to give rights for Industry to do whatever they want. Meanwhile Aboriginals are given a cookie cutter process where they identify burial sites, where they gather berries, fish and so forth. SWEET.

Let's put into perspective what we see from the indigenous perspective. We never used the term "pristine wilderness" Our society lived in harmony with mother earth. Like you and me, she has a life, giving birth to everything there is on this planet. For many a millenia, we found a balance to a way of life and we have a track record where we protect this earth, There are ways for a sustainable way of living.

What is progress? Is it exploitation and some revenue is paying taxes to the government? What about us? The people who live up here. It seems DeBeers left the Victor Pipe with a big hole in the ground. This gaping hole will continue to contaminate fish for many years to come. We know what happens when mercury enters the food chain.

The people up here have a limited or no voice. Many continue to live in condemned homes, boil water advisory ... to say the least, the economic situation is bleak. Living under a fragile social infrastructure is walking on thin ice.

Before anything should happen up here, the lives for the people who live up here must first be addressed and improved. That is number one. These questions should be at the forefront; what are your needs? What are your needs to improve the quality of life?

*'Reduce your carbon footprint, be energy efficient - this planet belongs to those not yet born'*

This whole process has shown no accountability, no transparency ... the leadership the government instilled for our people, Chief and councils are not talking amongst each other. Tribal councils who are supposed to bring technical assistance to our communities are applying for funds where communities are supposed to be taking the lead. Further to that, tribal council membership communities are fighting amongst each other. Hence, the people live inside the belly of a sinking Titanic.

We live in a home where the land is fragile, one of the planets largest peat and wetlands. The permafrost in the region is disappearing at a sad and alarming rate. The environment is not yet understood? Hydrology in the area needs to be understood as our lives depend on water. Without water, the earth is dead. We need resources to monitor our homelands ... if Industry paid for what they take out of the ground ... the place would be a happier place. This process which limits us to advisory roles, talking and sharing circles is a slap in the face ... on the other hand a wake up call to get our act together. After all, the resources are still under the ground.

There is always a positive to every negative ... We need time to reconnect with the foundation of our society and that is the people who live up here where our leaders identify as "grassroots".

Sincerely,

<Original signed by>

Samuel Hunter

C.c. Chief & Council - Weenusk First Nation  
Mattawa and Mushkegowuk Tribal Councils  
Community Members - Peawanuck  
MP Charlie Angus