

Resolution 9A

BANNING MINERAL EXPLORATION, MINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN MUNICIPAL WATERSHED AREA (PASSED)

⇒ Town of Bridgewater

WHEREAS public drinking water is one of five statements of Provincial interest within the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)*; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Departments must carry out their activities consistent with these statements;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities request that Nova Scotia Environment and the Department of Natural Resources ban mineral exploration, development and mining in municipal watershed areas in order to fulfill their obligations to this statement of Provincial interest.

Forwarded to:
Minister of the Department of Environment

RESPONSE (from Department of Natural Resources):

I am responding to your letter of November 21, 2011, to Honourable Sterling Belliveau, Minister of Nova Scotia Environment, regarding the Resolutions passed at the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities' November Annual Conference.

With respect to Resolution 9A, (Banning Mineral Exploration, Mining and Development in Municipal Watershed Area), please be assured that the protection of drinking water supplies is recognized as a priority for the Province of Nova Scotia. Mineral right holders must, at all times, abide the regulations and guidelines set out by the Department of Natural Resources and Nova Scotia Environment regarding work on or near all water courses. In addition, exploration work carried out under an exploration licence covering all or part of a municipal water supply area is subject to Section 73 of the Mineral Resources Regulations.

The Mineral Resources Act and Regulations imposes additional responsibilities on mineral right holders conducting exploration in water supply areas. These responsibilities, described in a notice accompanying the issued exploration licence, include consulting with the local operator and Nova Scotia Environment for any additional regulations.

The Department of Natural Resources and Nova Scotia Environment participate in the "One- Window Process" where proposed mineral

development activities are discussed among relevant departments. This ensures that relevant information is shared among agencies.

The exploration and development of mineral resources provides many benefits to our province. Information obtained about the local geology is of great benefit to the managers of municipal water supplies in understanding the natural features present that may affect the water quality. Economic benefits from the responsible development of these resources provide communities with opportunities for growth.

Commercial development of a mineral resource can only be conducted after the granting of a mineral lease and approvals by Nova Scotia Environment following a comprehensive environmental assessment and community engagement.

Staff from the Department of Natural Resources and Nova Scotia Environment would be available to discuss and address specific concerns to the safety of municipal water supplies, and provide information on geoscience and mineral exploration.

*The Honourable Charlie Parker
Minister
December 15, 2011*

RESPONSE (from Department of Environment):

Thank you for your November 21, 2011, letter regarding the Resolution passed at the recent Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities' (UNSM) Annual Fall Conference. I offer the following response:

The Province of Nova Scotia has adopted an integrated water management approach to managing water resources through the "Water For Life: Nova Scotia's Water Resource Management Strategy" (the Water Strategy) publication released last December.

The Department of Natural Resources is responsible for implementing policies and programs dealing with the exploration, development, and management of mineral resources. Nova Scotia Environment (NSE) regulates mining activity through approvals under the Environment Act. A Class 1 Environmental Assessment is required for mineral extraction and processing facilities, as well as pits and quarries larger than 4 hectares. Public consultation and the identification and consideration of water resources are part of the Environmental Assessment process.

Industrial approvals are also required for mines and mineral processing, quarries and certain pit operations. Industrial approval reviews also include identification and consideration of water resources and may include public consultation requirements for the project proponent.

Thank you for forwarding this resolution for my consideration.

*The Honourable Sterling Belliveau
Minister*

January 5, 2012