



Nunavummiut Makitagunarningit

January 10, 2013

Nunavummiut Makitagunarningit supports Idle No More movement

Nunavummiut Makitagunarningit stands in solidarity with our Indigenous brothers and sisters who are standing up for their rights. We back Inuit organizing flash mobs in Iqaluit, marching in cities across Canada, and continuing to stand up in communities across Nunavut to voice their concerns about the pace and scale of resource development on our lands.

As the name of the movement suggests, the Idle No More protests are about more than grievances with recent Federal legislation. Broadly, they are about grassroots Indigenous peoples standing up and declaring that they will not sit idle while their rights to land and relationship with the state are being altered without their consent. In this way, Idle No More is a call for all Indigenous peoples to awaken from within and resist the oppressive mechanisms that keep them in their place.

Nunavummiut increasingly recognize that, despite our land claim, our rights are also at stake as part of the Indigenous community in Canada. Resource development projects are approved no matter what is being said by Nunavummiut, with little regard for the protection of land, community control over resources, or the incorporation of Inuit culture into decision-making processes that Inuit fought so hard to secure. The land claim agreement was about Inuit having a say on what happens to us and our land, we continue to stand up and demand better.

Many Nunavummiut support some mining proposals, but they also want to make decisions on their own terms, according to their own language, culture, and values, and in ways that ensure the long-term well-being of our *nuna*. Nunavummiut are deeply concerned that the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated have both passed pro-uranium mining policies without any public votes or proper discussion through a public inquiry. Impact

and Benefit Agreements are negotiated with the mining industry in secret, without any public consultation. Reviews of mine proposals do not provide any opportunity for communities to vote on the proposals being considered. The review process does not require the mining industry to translate important documents into Inuktitut. Review schedules do not accord to Inuit seasonal activities, with meetings often taking place during the height of hunting seasons.

Nunavummiut expect better from our leaders and decision-makers than acceding to Harper's agenda to exploit our lands. We encourage all Canadians to stand up and demand that our leaders revisit pro-uranium policies, engage in public consultations around Impact and Benefit Agreements, hold community plebiscites for all mining proposals and make more space for Inuit culture in environmental reviews.

Nunavummiut have expressed concerns that a draft land use plan for Nunavut, which the Nunavut Planning Commission is in the process of presenting to communities, does not contain any restrictions on mining in caribou calving grounds. The consultation schedule released by the planning commission does not seem to include an opportunity for communities to select lands they want protected from mining. If Nunavut really is to operate as an Inuit homeland, allowing Inuit to decide what lands they want protected should be the basis of land use planning.

We are also concerned about changing treaty relationships without proper consultation. The Northern Jobs and Growth Act, intended to implement parts of the land claims agreement and provide greater certainty to the mining industry, is currently making its way through parliament. The Government of Nunavut, the institutions of public government and the representative Inuit organizations have all been consulted over this legislation. However, there have been no consultations with communities in Nunavut. It seems precarious precedents are being set on our relationship with the state. Our leaders may well be negotiating away our land claims rights, without any public engagement from those they are supposed to serve.

Inuit have been standing up and demanding more transparent, accountable, and responsible forms of governance, and we recognize that our hopes for Nunavut will only be strengthened by standing in solidarity with all the other Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples who are declaring that they will be idle no more. We urge our leaders to reorient development in Nunavut in a way that puts Inuit aspirations, and the well-being of the land and all Nunavummiut, ahead of corporate profits. Further, we hope our leaders will stand with us in solidarity with Indigenous peoples across Canada who are fighting for the well-being of all peoples and lands. Kanatammiut Makitagunarningit – the people of Canada can rise up!