

HOW DOES THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S REJECTION OF BAFFINLAND'S MINING EXPANSION PROJECT HELP CANADA'S SHRINKING ECONOMY?

OAKVILLE, ON, Nov. 18, 2022 - The International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 793 ("Local 793") is deeply disappointed with Federal Northern Affairs Minister Dan Vandal's decision to reject Baffinland Iron Mines' Phase 2 expansion proposal and his clear failure to recognize the significant economic consequences of this decision to many Canadian families.

Representing approximately 1,000 production employees who come from across the country to work at Baffinland's Mary River Mine on Baffin Island, Nunavut, including approximately 200 who are Inuit residing in the Qikiqtani Region, Local 793 believes the Minister's decision is not adequately considering the socio-economic impact of Phase 2 for workers.

"Following the decision by Minister Vandal, we're left questioning where Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland's comments about the global economy being at a turning point applies," Local 793 Business Manager Mike Gallagher said. "Currently, it doesn't look like it applies to Baffinland Iron Mines, where the future of more than 1,000 unionized jobs is now uncertain, let alone the 2,600 plus workers who rely on Baffinland Iron Mines for work."

Freeland's remarks were made in the 2022 Fall Economic Statement, where the federal government highlighted its plan to continue its sound stewardship of the economy and to be there for Canadians; to help families cope with increasing costs and delivering targeted support to the Canadians who need it the most.

In her statement, Freeland said:

"From critical minerals, to ports, to energy, we will continue to make it easier for businesses to invest in major projects in Canada—projects with meaningful Indigenous participation; projects that meet the highest environmental standards; projects that will create good jobs; and projects that will allow Canadian workers to drive our economy forward."

and

"That is why our Minister of Natural Resources is pitching Canada's critical minerals to the world, and working hard with provinces and territories to get them out of the ground and to global markets."

"How is it that on one hand the federal government says they are in favour of resource development and good paying jobs but on the other hand, reject the expansion of an already existing mine that has significant Inuit participation and employs workers from across Canada," questioned Business Manager Gallagher. "Losing well-paid skilled jobs when the cost of living has skyrocketed right across the country makes this news even harder to accept."

“Where can we relocate all these lost jobs if the mine cannot sustain its operation without growth?” Gallagher continued. “Loss of employment for hundreds of Canadians will cause hardship that cannot be undone.”

Since its inception, the Mary River Mine has provided thousands of good paying jobs for highly trained and skilled workers from across Canada, including the North Baffin Region. The Mine contributes about 23% of Nunavut’s GDP and is the Territory’s largest private sector employer.

Local 793 of the International Union of Operating Engineers represents more than 18,000 highly skilled crane and heavy equipment operators and other skilled workers employed in all sectors of the construction industry, industrial and mining sectors across the province of Ontario and the territory of Nunavut. Members of Local 793 operate mobile cranes, tower cranes, concrete pumps, bulldozers, excavators, graders, tractor loader backhoes and many other types of heavy equipment.

For further information: Local 793 Business Manager, Mike Gallagher, 905-469-9299, ext. 2202