

## New minerals legislation

### Closure and abandonment

Mine closure follows development and production and generally involves returning a site to a stable, non-polluting state. In many cases, the goals for what a site should look like when it is closed (i.e., end land-use objectives) developed early in a project will inform reclamation and closure plans. Closure also refers to a regulator decision to consider a site “closed,” which means the proponent is no longer responsible for the site.

Generally, the abandonment of a site occurs when a proponent leaves a site with no intention of returning, after failing to satisfy all the closure requirements of a licence. If this happens, the Yukon government steps in and takes responsibility for the site.

We want to see improved closure planning, long-term monitoring and maintenance, and reporting. We also want to consider how decisions about closure are made. In the event a site is abandoned, we want to be able to respond quickly and effectively.

#### The challenges

Closure is often a long process and plans often need to be adapted to changing circumstances and conditions. If government has to step in, there can be many complicated decisions to make to reduce environmental risks and limit financial liabilities.



Ketza River is an abandoned gold and silver mine in south-central Yukon.

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## Potential approaches

These are some of the approaches that we’re considering. We’d like to hear your thoughts.

- **Authorizing closure activities**  
We are considering the ability to issue a licence for closure and post-closure activities only. Alternatively, legislation could allow an existing production licence to be extended to carry out these activities.

- **Closure completion**

We are thinking about different ways to determine if closure of a site has been achieved. There are options as to who to involve in this decision, like affected First Nations and communities or the public. It could also be a third-party (e.g., a board or committee) decision in some cases.

When closure is achieved, a proponent may no longer be responsible for the site, but there could be circumstances where this is not an option. We could also enable government to withdraw the land from future mineral exploration or development activities.



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- **Monitoring and reporting**  
Legislation could require long-term monitoring and reporting on a project-specific basis. Legislation could also identify infrastructure types or permanent features that will always require long-term monitoring and reporting.
- **Sites under the care and control of government**  
If a proponent abandons a site, the Yukon government assumes responsibility for both the interim care and maintenance of the site, and its permanent closure. We are considering approaches that will ensure government can use site equipment, facilities and infrastructure to care, maintain, and close the site.
- **Closure planning**  
If abandonment happens, a new closure plan might be needed. One approach would be for the Government of Yukon to make this decision with affected Indigenous governments, and involve them in developing a new plan. The public could also be involved. This involvement could help to identify ways that Indigenous governments and local communities can benefit from closure projects.
- **Ensuring liabilities and closure requirements are transferred**  
If a site is sold or transferred to another proponent, the government needs to be able to ensure liabilities and closure requirements are transferred as well.

