



Original dated June 27, 2005

John W. Chisholm,
President,
Pioneer Coal Limited,
P.O. Box 1328
3098 Post Road
Antigonish, N.S. B2G 2L7

Dear Mr. Chisholm:

**Re: Environmental Assessment - Surface Coal Mine and Reclamation Project -
Prince Mine Site**

The environmental assessment of the proposed Surface Coal Mine and Reclamation Project, has been completed.

This letter is to advise that, pursuant to Section 13 (1)(a) of the *Environmental Assessment Regulations*, I have determined the registration information is insufficient to allow me to make a decision and that I require additional information.

The registration information submitted is deficient in its examination of flora, fauna and wetlands. Both Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (NSDNR) and Environment Canada have indicated that field studies for flora and fauna must be conducted in order to fully assess the potential environmental effects of the project. These studies must be submitted as more information. NSDNR also indicates that while the registration document indicates that no wetlands are present, existing mapping suggests that there are wetlands on the project site. Additional analysis is required to determine the presence or absence of wetlands, and if present, evaluations of their ecosystem function and significance is also required.

A number of public submissions were received with respect to potential effects on farming and fishing industries in the area. Additional information is required indicating how potential impacts to fishing and farming activities will be addressed if the project was to proceed.

Nova Scotia Environment and Labour has commissioned a study on the Cumulative Environmental Effects of Surface Coal Mines in CBRM. The study will provide an analysis of issues and recommendations for addressing concerns of all stakeholders. I will require the results of this report as a component of the more information to be submitted on this project. The study is expected to be completed by August 31st, and the final report will be considered in my decision on Pioneer Coal's proposed surface mine.

The information requested from Pioneer Coal can be submitted at your convenience, as an addendum to the original registration information. The proposed undertaking is a Category II Environmental Assessment under the Fee Schedule and will therefore require an \$4,473.00 registration fee at the time of submission of your additional information. A cheque should be made payable to the Minister of Finance.

Pioneer Coal Limited shall not commence the undertaking or any part thereof until the undertaking has been approved under Part IV of the *Environment Act*.

Yours truly,

Original Signed By

Kerry Morash
Minister