



**RCE Saskatchewan Response to:
Government of Saskatchewan Conditional Approval of the
Yancoal Southey Potash Mine
August 10, 2016**

The United Nations University Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development in Saskatchewan (UNU RCE-Saskatchewan) is part of a United Nations University initiative to support the *Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (DESD; 2005-2014)* and the *Global Action Programme on ESD* of UNESCO (2015 to present).



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UNU RCE-Saskatchewan seeks to transform education for sustainability in our region and focuses on research into formal, non-formal and informal learning methods and practices to build capacity of Saskatchewan communities towards the goal of a sustainable future.

RCE Saskatchewan provides a local to global research platform linked to an international network of over **146 UNU acknowledged RCEs worldwide.**

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For more information
 The Global RCE Service Centre
 Education for Sustainable Development Programme
 United Nations University – Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)
 Yokohama, Japan
rceservicecentre@ias.unu.edu



RCE Saskatchewan Response

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1. "Submitting a development agreement with the Rural Municipality of Longlaketon before construction begins to ensure that the RM is involved in the planning and development of the project."

RCE SK Reply: This is a major issue for the RM of Longlaketon and those currently serving as political representatives on the RM have not been subject to an election in which citizens in the RM have expressed their democratic voice as to who they want to represent them in this negotiating process with Yancoal. The current RM does not have the political and legislative mandate of the RM's citizens to proceed with these negotiations as the Ministry of Environment has only just conditionally approved the project.



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2. “Submitting a community involvement plan that commits to establishing a community advisory committee, community monitoring program, and further collaboration with community members.”

RCE SK Reply: It should not be Yancoal that is submitting a community involvement plan as they are not an impartial body but have a clear conflict of interest in the design of such an advisory committee, including its terms of reference and composition, and the terms and processes by which “the community” (however this is defined by the company) engages in monitoring (including what is to be monitored).



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3. “Submitting an environmental protection plan that includes monitoring of agriculture land, Loon Creek and water quality.”

RCE SK Reply: Again the environmental monitoring needs to be done by an independent, publicly accountable, scientific body as this is a state/governmental responsibility to Saskatchewan citizens and requires scientific expertise held by relevant public agencies. In the recent Husky Oil Spill in the North Saskatchewan River the Provincial Government reasonably rejected Husky's suggestion that it would monitor drinking water quality following the oil spill. The same principles of impartiality, accountability, and transparency apply in this case.



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4. **“Acquiring a permit to construct and operate the facility under The Mineral Industry Environmental Protection Regulations of 1996 pursuant to The Environmental Management and Protection Act of 2010.”**

RCE SK Reply: RCE Saskatchewan has contended that the project should be subject to the higher standards set by the Federal Government in the area of Environmental Assessment which would have applied to a project of this magnitude and type up until 2012 when amendments were made to the Federal Act. These go beyond existing provincial legislative requirements.



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5. "Acquiring a water allocation license from the Water Security Agency for the use of water from Buffalo Pound Lake."

RCE SK Reply: The Water Security Agency operates under the same Ministerial Authority as the Ministry of Environment and SaskWater (that is, Minister Herb Cox is the same minister responsible for all 3 agencies, with Minister Cox acting as chair of the WSA Board



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6. “Acquiring a license from the Ministry of the Economy for wells used in the mining process or the injection of brine.”

RCE SK Reply: RCE Saskatchewan's caution in relation to this entire proposal from a mining perspective is that it is our understanding that this is Yancoal's first ever potash mine. Yancoal's mining expertise is in the area of *coal mining*. .



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7. **“Obtaining approval from the Ministry of Environment for a decommissioning and reclamation plan and providing a financial assurance prior to project construction to address any environmental considerations that occur from the operation and eventual decommissioning of the facility.”**

RCE SK Reply: While requiring financial assurance for a company's ability to mitigate environmental damage is prudent, this still assumes that environmental damage caused by the mine can be reversed or mitigated through subsequent human activity. History shows that this is often not the case as certain forms of environmental damage are irreversible and potentially very serious.

RCE Saskatchewan Response Full Response

<http://www.saskrce.ca>

The Conditions of Saskatchewan Governments Approval Minister Herb Cox - August 9, 2016

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2016/august/09/yancoal-potash-mine>

For more information please contact:

Dr. Garth Pickard, Co-coordinator
RCE SK Sustainable Infrastructure
Working Group
Garth.pickard@uregina.ca
306-533-9487

or

Dr. Ray Ambrosi, Co-coordinator
RCE SK Sustainable Infrastructure
Working Group
rayambrosi@gmail.com