

May 27th, 2015

Hon. Greg Rickford, Minister of Natural Resources
Suite 159, East Block, House of Commons
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6



Cc' to:

Hon. Tony Clement, President of the Treasury Board
Alex Poirier-Gaboury, Policy and Regional Affairs Advisor, Office of the Hon. Minister Rickford
Neil Bouwer, Assistant Deputy Minister, NRCAN
Mark Pearson, Director General, NRCAN
Stephen Walker, Executive Director, Information Management and Open Government, Treasury Board
Mark Levene, Senior Advisor, Information Management and Open Government, Treasury Board

Dear Minister Rickford,

As the Government of Canada prepares to host the International Open Data Conference on 28-29 May, we, the undersigned, call on you to ensure that the information made available by a recently passed oil, gas and mining transparency law adheres to open data standards, including publication in a centralized database.

In December 2014, the Extractive Sector Transparency Measures Act (ESTMA) was passed into law. The Act requires public and large private oil, gas and mining companies to publicly disclose the payments they make to governments related to the extraction of natural resources. This marked a significant step forward in the global effort to fight corruption.

But one significant weakness remains: the law is silent on the format in which the information is to be structured or where it is to be published. This could result in the chaotic release of data on hundreds of company websites in any number of incompatible formats.

Disclosure of granular information about oil, gas and mining payments in an open and machine-readable format and in a centralized location will enable end-users in the more than 100 countries where Canadian extractive companies operate to quickly and easily access and analyze the data on billions of dollars of payments made to governments every year, and will continue Canada's strong leadership role in promoting and supporting the open data movement.

Without this important step, the stated goal of Canada's oil, gas and mining transparency law "to deter and detect corruption" will be significantly undermined. Citizens and journalists will find it more difficult to use the information, and errors and discrepancies will be more difficult to detect, undermining data quality.

The Government of Canada's commitments at the 2013 G8 Summit and in its Open Government Partnership National Action Plans refer to making data available in open data formats on easily accessible centralized government portals. We call on you to fulfil these commitments and unlock the enormous

potential of Canada's landmark transparency law by ensuring that this information is disclosed in machine readable formats in a publicly searchable centralized registry.

Signed:



Kady Seguin
Acting Director
Publish What You Pay Canada

Signatories:

African Resources Watch (AFREWATCH)
Canadian Council for International Cooperation
Citizens for Justice (Malawi)
Columbia Center for Sustainable Investment
Connected Development
Cordaid
Cristianas y Cristianos de Base de Madrid
Engineers Without Borders Canada
Global Financial Integrity
Global Integrity
Global Witness
IBIS (Education for Development)
Jamaa Resources Initiatives (Kenya)
Mennonite Central Committee Canada
Mining Watch Canada
Natural Resource Governance Institute
ONE
Open Corporates
Open Oil
OpenNorth
Oxfam Canada
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Publiez Ce Que Vous Payez France
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Publish What You Pay Australia
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Publish What You Pay Liberia
Publish What You Pay UK
Publish What You Pay US
Transparency International
Transparency International Canada
United Steelworkers
Woman for Supporting Woman (WSW)
World Voices Uganda