

OPEN LETTER: Protect farmland and private land from Bill-75

To: Premier Blaine Higgs

CC: MLA's

We, the undersigned are very concerned by Bill-75, which includes an amendment to the Mining Act that would give prospectors leave to go on private or farm land without permission.

The amendment has serious implications to farmers, private woodlot owners, and private landowners, as it negates the requirement for permission to enter private property, if a prospector is using hand tools or taking samples equivalent to 2 kilograms or 2 litres. A prospector simply driving in fields, let alone tampering with soil and plants, can do significant damage to the crops and livelihoods of farmers.

Mining companies have often claimed they have little interest in mineral claims on cultivated land due to fertilizer and pesticide use, but New Brunswick farmers indicate that this is not true and regularly have stakes or prospectors on their land, particularly in Charlotte County. Farmers have also raised concerns over the safety of prospectors themselves who are often unaware of agricultural practices and may be endangering themselves by coming into contact with pesticides, herbicides, or livestock.

As no consultation occurred with the agricultural or forestry industries, or the general public prior to the 1st reading, 2nd reading, or Committee debate of this Bill, we believe there has been a clear lack of due process.

The Department of Energy and Resource Development has failed to communicate the implications of Bill-75, and we, the undersigned are dismayed by the absence of consultation and the repercussions for farmers and private landowners. We demand that the Mining Act protect the rights of private landowners and farmers, and consultations now take place with the public and industries concerned.

Sincerely,

[signatures]