

Bill C-300: The PDAC going back to its roots

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The Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada was formed almost 80 years ago by a number of concerned prospectors and mining men to call for changes in a piece of Ontario legislation that would have been detrimental to the province's prospectors. The legislation was successfully contested by the lobbying and out of this effort the role of the PDAC was cast.

Over the years the PDAC has been instrumental in working with and sometimes against provincial and federal legislators in bettering the lot of Canada's men and women who search for and mine this country's mineral riches.

Today, the role of the PDAC has expanded beyond the country's borders as it plays a prominent role in the international mining scene to guide, promote and help Canadian explorers working around the world. Today at the PDAC's annual convention in Toronto, there are approximately 50 countries with official representation and delegates from dozens more countries. Canadian mining and exploration companies are active around the world and are world leaders in corporate social responsibility. But there is a threat to this thriving industry from within our borders.

Bill C-300 is a private member's bill introduced into the Canadian Parliament and currently at the committee stage, having gone through second reading. The bill, if passed, will negatively affect the ability of Canadian mineral companies to work internationally in developing countries. The intentions of the bill are worthy - improving corporate and social responsibility. However, the legislation would force companies working overseas to be investigated by either the Minister of International Development or the Minister of Foreign Affairs upon their receiving any complaint and to shut companies out from government assistance if found to be in non-compliance of yet-to-be defined CSR standards.

There is an awareness campaign underway at the convention to make delegates and visitors aware of the repercussions of the bill and to ask them to let their MPs know that the bill, if passed, will affect their livelihoods, drive corporate headquarters and well paying jobs out of this country, and have a deleterious effect on members of local communities, the very people whom the bill's proponents say they want to help.

Anti-Bill C-300 badges are being handed out at the convention and delegates are asked to wear them prominently. Information about how to contact MPs to express their concerns is available at the Bill C-300 hub on Level 800 next to the e3 Plus booth.

The Bill C-300 issue was addressed at the PDAC board meeting this morning and PDAC President Jon Baird spoke about the damage the bill will do if passed

While walking through the Investors Exchange and the Trade Show this morning, few buttons were seen, but in a few discussions with people manning booths, there was a high awareness of the bill and its consequences. Those with a direct stake in international projects seem to be aware of the bill's ramifications. In the next few days PDAC volunteers will be visiting the booths to reinforce the message that, if this bill is not defeated, there will be severe consequences to the industry. We have to let our elected representatives know this.