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**LANG TO ATTEND INAUGURAL MEETING OF WESTERN ENERGY ALLIANCE**

WHITEHORSE – Energy, Mines and Resources Minister Archie Lang is attending the inaugural meeting of the Western Energy Alliance in Calgary today.

“Our goal is to raise the profile of the Yukon’s abundance of energy resources,” said Minister Archie Lang. “I am looking forward to our first meeting. I expect we will see progress with the role of the alliance and find out how we can better cooperate to promote our energy resources.”

The Yukon government believes that energy is an area in which federal, provincial and territorial governments all have clear and legitimate interests, and that there is value in collaboration and cooperation, particularly to open up northern oil and gas basins. Yukon’s eight basins contain an estimated natural gas reserve of 20 trillion cubic feet.

“Demand for natural gas in North America continues to grow and northern gas can play a significant role in meeting this demand,” Lang said. “Development of the two northern pipelines and access to this infrastructure is essential to developing Yukon’s oil and gas industry. We are working diligently to ensure Canada and industry knows that both pipelines must allow access for Yukon gas.”

The Yukon government is intervening in two hearings to ensure the Yukon's interests are addressed in the application process for a Mackenzie gas project.

The western energy alliance was formed by Premiers at the Western Premiers Conference in Inuvik in July 2004. The goal was to pursue further cooperative initiatives in the energy field.

Minister Archie Lang, Minister of Energy for Alberta, Greg Melchin, and other provincial energy ministers will be available at a media briefing between 2:15 and 2:30 p.m., Friday, February, 18.

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