

As President of the Canadian Geoscience Education Network (CGEN), Canada's national organization for Earth education and outreach, I would like to express our pleasure at seeing an outreach and education strategy included as part of the new Minerals Strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador. Knowledge of Earth resources and their critical place in our everyday lives is extremely important for every citizen of our planet. It is an often forgotten part of educational strategies and leads to citizens developing unreasonable views with respect to mineral development. Everyone needs to understand that they use mineral and energy resources every day and that without them, their lives would be much less comfortable. Therefore education and outreach on the Earth and its resources are extremely important for responsible citizenship.

Geoscience education and outreach is also important for alerting young people to the possibilities for employment in minerals and energy industries. Since Earth science and resources are not generally a big part of school curricula across Canada, it is doubly important to raise awareness of the great employment possibilities in the resource industries. Many studies have shown that there will be shortages of many kinds of skilled workers related to resource industries and so we need to work harder to attract people to these industries. I am delighted to see that the Mines Branch is currently operating outreach programs to communities and schools.

On behalf of the more than 400 CGEN members across Canada, I would like to extend congratulations for recognizing the importance of education and outreach as part of the Minerals Strategy. We already have several members from Newfoundland and Labrador. From them, we know that effective programs have already been mounted in the province and we want you to know that we are also willing to use our broad membership base to assist you in any way possible in bringing an even stronger outreach and education component to your minerals strategy.

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