

# Copper One Responds to the MERN and Commences Mandamus Proceedings Against the MFFP in the Superior Court

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QUEBEC CITY, Feb 6, 2017 - [Copper One Inc.](#) ("Copper One" or "the Company") (TSX VENTURE:CUO) reports that on Friday, February 3, 2017, it responded to the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources' ("MERN") letter (see Copper One's press release dated January 27, 2017, for a copy of the letter) dated January 20, 2017, pursuant to which the MERN enclosed a draft ministerial decision pertaining to the proposed suspension of all of Copper One's mining claims at the Rivière Doré Project.

Copper One has cause to believe that the MERN influenced the Quebec Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks ("MFFP") in order to delay or prevent the issuance of a forestry permit to Copper One and, as a result, the Company has commenced mandamus proceedings in the Superior Court of Quebec to force the issuance of such permit by the MFFP.

In its response letter to the MERN, a translated English excerpt of which is copied below, Copper One points out that all of the claims it holds are duly-registered under the *Mining Act* in the Province of Québec.

## Excerpt of Copper One's Letter to the MERN:

A sampling program carried out from 2008 to 2011 revealed that the territory on which Copper One's holds its claims in the Lac Barrière area is potentially rich in metals such as copper and nickel. As a result, in the summer of 2011, Copper One announced that it was launching a drilling program that would include exploration activities such as cartography, soil sampling, outcrop sampling, surveys of geophysical anomalies in the soil, setting up a camp, stripping, trenching, drilling and the transportation of necessary equipment related thereto. The drilling program in question is better known as the "Rivière Doré Project". The area spanning such claims is located 175 kilometres south-west of Val-d'Or.

Copper One had intended to proceed with the exploration of this area in 2016 and the beginning of 2017.

On February 15, 2012, the MERN suspended the term of all of Copper One's claims retroactively to July 4, 2011, at Copper One's request and in accordance with section 63 of the *Mining Act*.

The suspension followed upon Copper One's decision to negotiate an agreement in principle with the Algonquins of Lac Barrière and extended from July 4, 2011 to June 28, 2016, during which time Copper One continued making overtures to the Algonquins of Lac Barrière with a view to entering into an agreement allowing for mining exploration. Unfortunately, the Lac Barrière Algonquin Band Council ignored Copper One's repeated requests to set a date for a meeting with its representatives.

On June 28, 2016, the MERN rendered Ministerial Decision 32-21016, which lifted the suspension of the term of Copper One's claims on the reasoning that public safety issues justifying such suspension no longer existed. Copper One never contacted the MERN to request that the suspension of its claims be lifted, nor was it consulted by the MERN before such decision was made.

Thus the MERN unilaterally lifted the suspension of the term of the claims covered by the Rivière Doré Project, which triggered a reboot of Copper One's previous activity and led to the implementation of a drilling program to test the target sites which had been identified and selected in 2011 following the sampling program.

Furthermore, Copper One launched a public offering in order to restart its drilling program. At the same time, on October 21, 2016, Copper One fulfilled all the requirements to obtain a forestry permit to carry out the deforestation required to access the site and start drilling. On October 21, 2016, as a result of a call for tenders, Copper One awarded a contract to Orbit-Garant Drilling Inc. to complete the drilling in the area spanning the Rivière Doré Project claims.

Copper One has taken measures to ensure that the environmental impact of its drilling program would be reduced as much as possible. It has selected drilling sites near existing forest roads or sites recently involved

in logging activities by logging companies. To obtain its forestry permit, Copper One waited until the expiry of the consultation period ordered by the MFFP, which commenced in November 2016 and involved the Lac Barrière Algonquin Band. This consultation period was initially scheduled to last two (2) weeks but, on November 14, 2016, the Lac Barrière Algonquin Band requested an extension to complete its review of the file. Despite this extension, which they themselves had requested, the Lac Barrière Algonquins never took part in the consultation.

Upon the expiry of the consultation period, Copper One remained uninformed about its application for a forestry permit, although it fulfilled all the requirements set forth in the *Sustainable Forest Development Act*. Wishing to wait no longer, Copper One sent a letter on December 21, 2016 to Mr. Pierre Arcand, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, and to Mr. Luc Blanchette, Minister of Forests, Wildlife and Parks, in which letter it demanded the immediate issuance of the forestry permit, initially requested on October 21, 2016, to carry out the work relating to its mining activities. The letter remained unanswered. On January 17, 2017, Copper One sent a lawyer's letter to Mr. Luc Blanchette, Minister of Forests, Wildlife and Parks, in which it demanded that the forestry permit to carry out the work relating to mining activities, initially requested on October 21, 2016, be issued by no later than January 20, 2017.

This letter also remained unanswered and, on January 20, 2017, MERN is the one that sent Copper One the aforementioned Notice of Draft Ministerial Decision.

The suspension of the term of the mining claims was not in any way required by Copper One, which is adversely affected thereby and strongly opposed thereto.

On January 24, 2017, Copper One's attorneys requested a complete copy of the Company's file, which was provided to them on January 31, 2017, after many reminders and representations on their part. Essentially, the file contains the following:

1. A copy of the letter and of the January 20, 2017 Draft Decision, and
2. Four (4) emails.

The Draft Decision mentions "*the likelihood that physical impediments preventing the carrying out of exploration work on the [claims] would be set up by third parties if representatives of Copper One Inc. did go to the Lac Barrière area.*"

However, the so-called "physical impediments" referred to in the Draft Decision are in no way supported by the internal correspondence of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, which internal correspondence was provided to us.

To the contrary:

1. The email exchanged on January 18, 2017 between Lucie Ste-Croix, the *directrice générale* (Chief Executive Officer), *Direction générale de la gestion du milieu minier* (Directorate of Mining Industry Management), and Robert Keating, the Deputy Minister for Natural Resources, reveals that Sûreté du Québec would provide secured access to the territory.
2. In the same email, Copper One read that part of the Algonquin community of Lac Barrière would be favourable to mining activity.
3. The January 19, 2017 email from Mtre Hélène Giroux, chef du Bureau de la coordination et des affaires législatives (Head of the Office of Coordination and Legislative Affairs) of the MERN to Brigitte Dionne, the *registraire* (Registrar), refers to a "potentially conflictual situation".
4. Copper One has always acted in compliance with the law and all existing rules.
5. In respect of all stakeholders concerned, it has maintained an exemplary attitude.
6. In fact, it was able to gain access to the territory subject to the mining claims multiple times since the suspension was lifted in June 2016.
7. Copper One has always stated its intention to assert its rights in the courts of competent jurisdiction in the event that illegal acts committed by third parties (which has not been the case to date) prevented it from gaining access to the territory subject to the mining claims.
8. Asserting such rights in courts of competent jurisdiction is the preferred avenue in a democratic society. Precedents in similar cases show that the issuance of injunctions is the appropriate remedy, as witnessed by the precedent in *PF Résolu Canada inc. v. Wawaté*, which judgment is attached hereto.
9. Moreover, the suspension of the claims, as contemplated by the MERN, has no factual basis except for potential and presumed "physical impediments" on the road to the relevant area whereas our client, if required to do so, could in fact proceed with the scheduled drilling by accessing the area by helicopter, which is what mining corporations do when roads to drilling sites are inaccessible.

A review of the MERN's file reveals no public safety issue. To the contrary, it brings to light the fact that the MERN is preparing to render a premature decision which is beyond the powers vested in the MERN under the *Mining Act*.

In addition to being erroneous in fact and in law, the decision which the MERN is on the verge of making would be the fruit of a highly irregular procedure. Copper One has cause to believe that the MERN intervened with the MFFP to delay or prevent the issuance of the forestry permit and, as a result, Copper One was compelled to institute mandamus proceedings in the Superior Court to compel the issuance of such permit.

The Draft Decision is erroneous, has no basis in fact, is abusive and constitutes an excess of jurisdiction. If such a decision is rendered, Copper One intends to mount a vigorous defence and reserves all of its rights, including the right to adduce any other relevant fact.

### **About Copper One Inc.**

Copper One is a Canadian-based mineral exploration company focused on the advancement of its 100%-owned Rivière Doré Project, located south-east of Val-d'Or, Quebec, for which all its resources are dedicated thereto.

Copper One trades on the TSX Venture Exchange under the symbol "CUO".

### ***Forward-looking Information***

*This press release contains "forward-looking information" within the meaning of applicable Canadian securities legislation. Forward-looking information includes, without limitation, statements regarding the Company's exploration program, the ability of the Company to obtain the necessary permits, the results of the Company's exploration program, the potential of the Rivière Doré property, the Company's response to the MERN, potential legal action by the Company, the availability and impact of Copper One's legal remedies, the impact of the potential suspension of the Rivière Doré claims on the Company and its stakeholders and the future plans or prospects of the Company. Generally, forward-looking information can be identified by the use of forward-looking terminology such as "plans", "expects" or "does not expect", "is expected", "budget", "scheduled", "estimates", "forecasts", "intends", "anticipates" or "does not anticipate", or "believes", or variations of such words and phrases or state that certain actions, events or results "may", "could", "would", "might" or "will be taken", "occur" or "be achieved". Forward-looking information is subject to known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause the actual results, level of activity, performance or achievements of Copper One, as the case may be, to be materially different from those expressed or implied by such forward-looking information. Although Copper One has attempted to identify important factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those contained in forward-looking information, there may be other factors that cause results not to be as anticipated, estimated or intended. There can be no assurance that such information will prove to be accurate, as actual results and future events could differ materially from those anticipated in such statements. Accordingly, readers should not place undue reliance on forward-looking information. Copper One does not undertake to update any forward-looking information, except in accordance with applicable securities laws.*

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