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Explosives facility paid to move from Yoho Lake; Province giving \$267,000 to firm

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Three years after outrage ignited when an explosives storage facility was allowed to locate near a local Boy Scout camp, the provincial government is paying the company to move.

Natural Resources Minister Keith Ashfield confirmed Wednesday the province will pay Dyno Nobel up to \$267,000 to terminate its Crown lease near Yoho Lake and cover relocation fees.

The company will move what's estimated to be 50,000 kilograms of explosives to private land off the Hanwell Road.

"The adjacent landowners were consulted. They had no problems with the new location," Ashfield said.

"We went through the regular process with the (Department of the) Environment and Local Government by issuing permits and posting to see if there were any objections. There were none."

An internal government committee was unable to find another suitable Crown land location to move the explosive-storage facility, so the private site was chosen.

Since the company had a 20-year lease with the province, the government is giving Dyno Nobel a "settlement agreement" that will help cover relocation expenses.

Ashfield said the settlement is fair because the company had met all regulatory requirements at the Yoho Lake-area location.

The storage facility is located about 25 kilometres southwest of Fredericton and less than 500 metres from the Scouts Canada property.

"We had an agreement with Dyno Nobel and it was our responsibility to make that payment," Ashfield said.

The explosives will be moved "very soon," once the final paperwork is signed by all parties, the minister said. The Conservative cabinet approved the settlement deal May 26.

Ashfield said the Department of Transportation has given the company permission to transport the explosives using the Mazerolle Settlement Road, instead of the nearby Hunter Road, to improve safety. Truck traffic is not normally allowed on the Mazerolle Settlement route, he said.

Liberal MLA Scott Targett, who owns 50 hectares of land near the explosives- storage facility, said he is

satisfied with the government's decision to settle with Dyno Nobel.

Targett, who led a citizens' group opposing the location before being elected the MLA for York, said the government has recognized it made a mistake by leasing the land near the Boy Scout camp.

"The move has been a long time coming and it's about time," he said. "Now, they are finally following through on what they promised."

Targett said there are no concerns with the new location.

"All the landowners around have been consulted and from what I am being told there is no issue," he said.

The scouts' lodge was destroyed by fire in 2002, less than six months after the controversy over the explosives site was raised in the provincial legislature.

Scouts Canada built a new lodge at the site, but wanted the explosives moved before the lodge was used, Targett said.

"They just built a brand new lodge, a beautiful lodge, and the perceived risk from the scouting community was that it was not acceptable to allow scouting activities to take place while that facility was still located where it was," he said.

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