

## **Elliot Lake Inquiry hearings expected to start March 4, 2013**

Ottawa, January 9 - The public hearings of the Elliot Lake Commission of Inquiry are expected to start in the week of March 4, 2013, the Commissioner, the Hon. Paul Bélanger, announced today.

The start date assumes that construction of the Inquiry's hearing room at the former White Mountain Academy of the Arts is completed and that the Commission receives all documents required for the hearing that it summoned, the Commissioner said in an open letter to the residents of Elliot Lake.

"We have been working at full speed to gather the information and documents we need before we can proceed with public hearings," he wrote. "We have so far received approximately 280,000 documents and my team is diligently reviewing, categorizing and classifying them."

Commission investigators have interviewed approximately 250 people.

The Commissioner pointed out that in October he heard applications for standing at Elliot Lake and in December he held a hearing in Ottawa on two requests to keep certain documents confidential. He has now issued his ruling that is available on the Inquiry's web page [www.elliottlakeinquiry.ca](http://www.elliottlakeinquiry.ca).

The public hearings will be broadcast on the Internet and the local cable company is looking at the possibility of broadcasting the proceedings.

There will be seating in the hearing room for the public as well as an overflow room with a large television set.

The Elliot Lake Inquiry was established on July 19, 2012 by the Government of Ontario under the Public Inquiries Act, 2009. Its mandate is to inquire into and report on events surrounding the collapse on June 23, 2012, of the Algo Centre Mall in Elliot Lake, the deaths of Lucie Aylwin and Doloris Perizzolo and the injuries to other individuals as well as the emergency management and response. Furthermore, the Commission is to review relevant legislation, regulations and bylaws, policies and procedures of provincial and municipal governments and other parties with respect to the structural integrity of the Algo Centre Mall and the emergency management and response. The Commission is to make recommendations to prevent such occurrences in the future.

The full text of the Commissioner's letter to residents as well as other information is available on the Inquiry's web page <http://www.elliottlakeinquiry.ca>.

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