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## The Review Board releases Report of Environmental Assessment on De Beers Canada Inc.'s Snap Lake Amendment Project

YELLOWKNIFE – The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (Review Board) has released a report recommending to the Minister of Lands of the Government of the Northwest Territories that the Snap Lake Amendment Project (the Project) can proceed to the regulatory phase for approvals, subject to measures that mitigate adverse environmental impacts.

The *Report of Environmental Assessment and Reasons for Decision* (the *Report of EA*) for the Snap Lake Amendment Project was released by the Review Board today. The *Report of EA* describes the Board's environmental assessment findings. The environmental assessment was coordinated with the regulatory process of the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board. Taking a total of seven and a half months, this was the shortest environmental assessment conducted by the Review Board to date.

The Snap Lake Amendment Project, proposed by De Beers Canada Inc., consists of increasing the concentration of total dissolved solids and some of its constituents (chloride, fluoride, nitrate, strontium, and sulphate) discharged from the Snap Lake Diamond Mine into Snap Lake. De Beers has applied to increase these concentrations to a value that is above the current water license limit, which is based on a measure from a previous environmental assessment.

After careful consideration, the Review Board concluded that the Project, as proposed, is likely to cause significant adverse environmental impacts. These impacts will be minimized by the measures set out in the Review Board's *Report of EA*. The measures will:

- ensure the water in Snap Lake is safe to drink and the fish are safe to eat
- ensure that contaminants released from the Snap Lake Mine do not adversely affect the Snap Lake ecosystem, downstream ecosystems and traditional uses
- require additional water treatment or other approved mitigation measures to achieve the above objectives

De Beers has committed to keeping the water safe to drink, fish safe to eat, and maintaining the ecosystem function in Snap Lake. In the opinion of the Review Board, the above measures and the commitments described in the *Report of EA* will mitigate significant adverse impacts and address public concern. The Board recommends approval subject to these measures and commitments. The Review Board intends that the measures, if approved, will replace measures that set limits on total dissolved solids from the previous Snap Lake Diamond Mine Report of Environmental Assessment.

The *Report of EA* has been sent to the Minister Lands for his consideration. Once the *Report of EA* is accepted by the Minister, the Snap Lake Amendment Project can move to the permitting and licensing phase.

The Review Board's *Report of EA* for the Snap Lake Amendment Project (EA1314-02) is available online in the public registry at: <http://www.reviewboard.ca/>

**For further information, please contact**

Stacey Menzies

**[smenzies@reviewboard.ca](mailto:smenzies@reviewboard.ca)**

(867) 766-7060

**About the Review Board**

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board was established by the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* in 1998 as an independent administrative tribunal responsible for the environmental impact assessment process in the Mackenzie Valley, Northwest Territories. As a co-management board, aboriginal land claim organizations nominate half of the board members, and the federal and territorial governments nominate the other half of the board members. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development appoints all members to the Review Board including the Chairperson.