

Mackenzie Valley
Review Board



Re: Development of joint policy on engagement and consultation by the Land and Water Boards of the Mackenzie Valley (Gwich'in, Sahtu, Wek'èezhii, and Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Boards) and the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (collectively "the Boards").

Engagement and consultation are central to the permitting, licensing, and environmental impact assessment processes in the Mackenzie Valley. Under the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (MVRMA), the Boards must:

- ensure that the concerns of Indigenous people and the general public are taken into account, and
- have regard for the protection of the social, cultural, and economic well-being of residents of the Mackenzie Valley and the well-being and way of life of the Indigenous peoples.

The Boards take these responsibilities very seriously and recognize the value of meaningful engagement and consultation. The principles of shared responsibility, appropriate disclosure, inclusiveness, and reasonableness guide the Boards' practices and decisions in relation to engagement and consultation (see section 1.5 of the [MVLWB Engagement and Consultation Policy](#) (*MVLWB Policy*; 2013) and the Review Board's [Interim Policy Statement](#)).

The Boards, proponents, the Crown, and affected parties all have responsibilities related to engagement and consultation. When everyone does their part, meaningful engagement and consultation reduces conflict and encourages strong projects that are supported by and will benefit the people of the Mackenzie Valley.

A joint engagement and consultation policy for the Boards

The Land and Water Boards of the Mackenzie Valley and the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board are pursuing the development of a joint engagement and consultation policy to:

- **update** the existing *MVLWB Policy* to reflect experience over the past several years and emerging best practices; and
- **expand** the policy to include environmental assessment and impact review.

A joint policy would affirm the Boards' shared principles and present a consistent policy for their processes. It is envisioned that the joint policy will cover the roles of the Boards, the Board's expectations for project proponents, and the interface between Board processes and overall Crown Consultation.

Next steps in development of a joint engagement and consultation policy

The Boards are beginning work on a draft joint policy document and are anticipating a public review period during Fall 2019. During the public review period, the Boards will organize engagement sessions to provide opportunities for discussion and direct input from interested parties.

For now:

- 1. Parties who wish to do so can provide early input**, for example: based on parties' experience in regulatory processes, are there specific gaps in the current policy, key principles that should be added, high level topics that should be added or updated, opportunities for consistency with other policies, or major considerations for expanding the policy to include environmental assessment and impact review? (Please note that there will be time for detailed discussions during the public review of the draft joint policy and that implementation details are/will be described separately in Board guidelines).
- 2. The Boards would like to hear how parties wish to be engaged** during the public review period.

If you would like to provide this type of early input, please do so by **September 30th, 2019** so that the Boards can consider it as we develop a work plan for the joint policy and initiate drafting.

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About the Boards

Under the MVRMA, the Boards are created to regulate the use of land and water and the deposit of waste and to conduct environmental impact assessment in the Mackenzie Valley. The Land and Water Boards regulate the use of land and water and the deposit of waste through the issuance and management of land use permits (permits) and water licences (licences) and also conduct preliminary screenings as part of the environmental impact assessment process. The Review Board conducts environmental assessments or impact reviews for proposed developments that might have a significant adverse impact on the environment or might cause public concern (such as major projects or projects in sensitive areas).