



December 19, 2016

Mark Cliffe-Phillips
Executive Director
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
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Re: Response to Review Board Information Requests to Aboriginal government organizations and resource managers (EA 1617-01 Tìchq All-season Road)

Context:

In the October 28, 2016 letter to Aboriginal Governments and organizations (PR#74) Re: *EA1617-01 Tìcho All-season Road, Review Board Information requests to Aboriginal government organizations and resource managers*, the Review Board directs an information request to TG, YKDFN, NSMA, DGGFN, WRRB, and DFO regarding fish harvesting. The information request states:

“Please list potential aboriginal fisheries in waterbodies along the road route, as well as Lac La Marte. Evaluate and describe the potential for changes to harvesting pressure on these aboriginal fisheries as a direct or indirect result of the construction and operation of the TASR (for example as a result of increased access to aboriginal fisheries off of the road). Please describe how any listed changes will affect harvesters and impact the affected fishery. Provide any suggestions for mitigation measures to reduce any perceived significant impact or improve management of the fishery and describe how and why the mitigation measure is effective.”

WRRB Response:

The Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) has a mandate for wildlife (including fish), plant and forest management in Wek'èezhìi and adheres to the principles and practices of conservation in fulfilling its duties. Though the WRRB, in partnership with other NWT-based organizations, is involved with the collection of information related to assessing the health of aquatic ecosystems as part of the Tìchq Aquatic Ecosystem Monitoring Program (TAEMP), the WRRB does not collect information specific to fish harvest levels or changes in fish harvest levels. The WRRB is well aware of the importance of fish to community members in Whatì, and that Whatì is known as the “dryfish capital” of the Tìchq Region. During implementation of the TAEMP in Whatì, WRRB staff heard concerns about changes to the fishery that may occur as a result of factors such as climate change and developments such as the proposed road. However, the WRRB is unable to provide detailed information on potential changes to harvesting pressure along the proposed TASR route at this time. In addition, the WRRB is also currently not able to provide detailed commentary on the impacts to fisheries and the related mitigation measures, as discussions between Board Staff and Board members have not occurred in relation to the Review Board's information request. The WRRB will have an

opportunity to discuss the Review Board's request at the next WRRB meeting scheduled the week of February 6, 2017. The WRRB appreciates an extension on the information request has already been granted by the Review Board (PR#84) after receiving a request for an extension from NSMA (PR#83), and the WRRB remains open to providing relevant information to the Review Board as such information becomes available.

The WRRB recognizes that the Tłıchǫ Government (TG) has provided information on fish harvest locations as part of their Traditional Knowledge Study for the proposed TASR (PR#28), and that this information can assist with discussion of impacts and proposed monitoring and mitigation. To aid Parties and the Review Board in the EA process, the WRRB provides a 1997 report that was prepared under contract for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans entitled "A review of the status and harvests of fish stocks in the North Slave area" (attached). The report provides some information on the aboriginal fishery in Lac La Martre, and together TG's Traditional Knowledge report will be used as part of the WRRB's further discussions on the Review Board's information request. It should be noted that the 1997 report states in the discussion that:

"The magnitude of subsistence harvests in the North Slave area has also not been documented in recent years. This information gap is perhaps the greatest unknown to fishery managers in the area. The documentation of these fisheries and their harvests offers managers perhaps their greatest challenge."

The WRRB provides the report in the hope that more recent information of a similar nature is available via DFO and others (e.g. GNWT Industry Tourism and Investment), including any additional information on the commercial, sport or domestic gill netting (non aboriginal) which could supplement information provided in Appendix B (PR#7) of the TASR PDR. Such information would assist in continuing the discussion of possible changes to harvest pressure, and the monitoring and mitigation that is needed as part of development and operations of the proposed TASR.

Sincerely



Grant Pryznyk, Chair
Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board

cc. Jody Pellissey, Executive Director
Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board

Ruari Carthew, Senior Environmental Assessment Officer
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board

Attachment:

Stewart, D.B. 1997. A review of the status and harvests of fish stocks in the North Slave area, Northwest Territories. Can. Manuscr. Rep. Fish. Aquat. Sci. 2393: iv + 69 p.