

EA 03-009

Delivered by hand.  
-Greg Nyoti

As referred in Pre-Hearing Conference for Impaired Gahet EA

**DEH GAH GOT'IE DENE & FORT PROVIDENCE METIS**

October 10, 2003

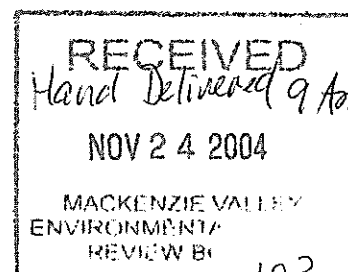
**Position paper on Proposed Mackenzie Gas Project**

The Dene and Metis of Fort Providence are an Impacted community and must be included as an affected community with respect to the proposed Mackenzie Gas Project. The traditional territories' of both the Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis will be affected by the proposed Mackenzie Gas Project and its' associated activities. The Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis will determine their level of support of the Mackenzie Gas Project and the conditions by which that support is provided, in conjunction with other affected communities and holding a special regard for the Deh Cho Process and Negotiations. We understand that the present corridor communities are participating in a working group established by the leadership. It is our intention to join that working group. The Pipeline Working Groups' task is assessing the impacts and benefits of the proposed pipeline that may form the basis for support and working through the leadership towards consensus, for a time and point when ultimate consent may be given for the proposed Mackenzie Gas Project. We believe the Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis are a corridor community and we shall be a full member of the Pipeline Working Group.

The community of Fort Providence is situated on the northern shores of the Mackenzie River and adjacent the Mackenzie Highway. The proposed Mackenzie Gas Project right of way will cross the southeast portion of the Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis traditional lands. However, the impact of the construction process has a much greater potential negative impact on the river directly in front of Fort Providence: specifically the transportation of the pipe and all other associated supplies that will bring potential irreversible damage to our traditional land use area.

The Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis have traditionally worked together from a proactive position of strength and our community leads the Deh Cho in demonstrating this union. We support the ideals of the Deh Cho Process and stand strongly on the values and principles that will lay the foundation of our government. We also supported the August 2001 Wrigley Special Assembly Resolutions regarding a proposed pipeline on our traditional territory. Thus far we have been observing the progress of the corridor communities and their discussions of the proposed pipeline. We could only hope that the mistakes of the past will not be repeated in the present pipeline experience. The Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis believe that we must learn from our mistakes and work together as one.

The position of the Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis is consistent with the principles of the Watershed, One House Concept, Elders' perspectives, and the August 2001 Wrigley Special Assembly Resolutions. The Elders have clearly stated for us to work together and stand as one. The Elders have given us a blue print of the One House Concept, where we all exist under one roof for all of our families to share and help each other. The above were the key themes the Elders laid out in the August 2001 Wrigley Special Assembly Resolutions regarding the proposed pipeline. Finally, we believe that the watershed of the Kakisa River, Redknife River, Bouvier Creek and ultimately Mackenzie River will be impacted by the proposed pipeline. For these reasons, the Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis assert that we are a primary affected community and request inclusion in the Pipeline Working Group.



## DEH GAH GOT'IE DENE & FORT PROVIDENCE METIS TRADITIONAL LAND

The traditional land use area of the Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis extends north of Birch Lake, then southeast to Gypsum Point, then running south along the shores of Great Slave Lake to Big Island, including the west part of Great Slave Lake, then running south towards the east side of Tathlina Lake then running west to the Redknife Hills and to the east side of Trout Lake and then north to Fort Simpson, then running north over the Horn Plateau and then running east to Birch Lake. It is important to keep in mind that K'agee Tu First Nation was once part of the Deh Gah Got'ie Dene Council. We have a common traditional land use area. The Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis traditionally trapped, hunted, fished and traded in the area between Trout Lake and Tathlina Lake. There are important significance attached to the Redknife River, Bouvier Creek, Axe Point, Mills Lake and the area including the southeast portion of the Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis traditional lands that will be impacted by the proposed pipeline.

Redknife area: Tsudaatu

Significance: A legend tells of a large gathering that took place at the mouth of the Redknife River before the coming of the fur traders. A tea dance and ceremony laid contours of footprints around an island that still exists today. A homestead once existed across the mouth of the Redknife River.

It is well known that the families of the late Johnny Gargan and Baptiste Gargan, including the Sabourins, maintained their homestead across the Redknife River. The families hunted, trapped, and fished in that area till the 1950's.

Bouvier Creek: K'aa ndue

As the name suggests, the family of the late Johnny Bouvier maintained their homestead by Bouvier Creek and on what is now the Mackenzie Highway. The late Joe Bouvier also traded with Dene of Kakisa and Trout Lake from this area. The Lafferty family had used the area as well, for hunting, fishing and trapping. The area is well known for moose in the summer and fall.

Axe Point area: Thi?oa

The area had numerous homesteads till the late 1950's as the migration to Fort Providence began. The area was also the site of a United States Army Base in the 1950s. Currently the area is trapped by George Nadli and his cabin exists across Axe Point.

Mills Lake Area: Tua

Mills Lake continues to be a major harvesting area for the Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis. Big game, fish, and water fowl are the featured wildlife around the lake and its tributaries. A small village existed till the early 1950's at Big Point on the northwest shore of Mills Lake. The family of the late Michel Landry maintained a homestead. They hunted, trapped, and fished in the area and towards the Horn Plateau. The main tributary flowing in Mills Lake is the Horn River which is a major harvesting area and extensively used by the Nadli family, who have cabins situated near the mouth of the Horn River.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

The construction of the proposed pipeline will impact the southeast portion of the Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis traditional lands. Moreover the construction of the pipeline will require the pipes to be shipped with barges from Hay River to their destination down river. The barging process will require deeper channels as the weight of the 32 inch pipes will be heavier than normal. As a result, the required dredging and barging will impact the river system and water ways of the Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis. Furthermore, we anticipate to bear the socio-economic impacts of the proposed pipeline.

### *River Transportation*

The most sensitive area is the river. The Hay River harbour, Beaver Lake and the entrance of Mills Lake will all have to be dredged and this will cause great environmental problems. The added silt in the water will disturb the fish, aquatic life and including the waterfowl. The added silt will also cause the water temperature to rise, causing fish to die and kill the fish eggs. The higher water temperature will also cause more weeds to grow in the area.

The large loads on deep draft barges will cause huge waves which will wash out the steep river banks. This undercutting of the banks will cause erosion and accelerate the loss of small islands in the Fort Providence area. The erosion of the islands will in turn cause further silting in the channels and this in turn will require more dredging creating a vicious circle. The heavy loads and multiple barges will have to be taken apart and moved one by one through Providence Rapids. This means that every big load actually will turn out to be about ten to twenty trips through the Providence rapids causing severe deterioration of the shore line and islands. The potential to destroy the rivers and fish stocks is a real threat with the amount of material and supplies that will have to be moved on the river. If one cannot fathom the scale of the impact then reference is made to the Mississippi and other major rivers of the world and how they have been all but destroyed forever.

### *Highway Transportation*

The road transportation will cause deterioration of our highways and the potential for accidents causing loss of animals and human life. The noise from trucks and construction will likely impact the wildlife population, particularly the moose and woodland caribou by the change of migration routes. The increase in highway traffic will also mean a transient workforce and population increase in our communities.

### *Impact on Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis and Community*

We expect some of our people and businesses will be involved in the construction of the pipeline. Such opportunities will likely have an effect on our families in a more often negative way with an increase of drug and alcohol abuse, family break-up, higher crime rates, and an increase of a transient population. This may also mean less dependency on hunting and trapping and the loss of culture associated with maintaining a relationship with the land and environment. Being that culture is defined by the relative kinship with the environment, the inevitable further decline of the languages of the Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis will likely occur. The traditional values and principles will come under challenge and likely result in a change in the way of life and loss of culture of the Dene and Metis.

## ASSESSMENT

### *Regional View*

Deh Cho First Nations prefer a united collective position of all communities. This would make the negotiating position stronger and manageable in the context of consistency of principles and political unity. Most importantly, the Deh Cho First Nation regional view is that all communities will be affected by major resource development projects, consistent with the view of the Elders and the One House Concept.

Ironically, the symbolism of the pipeline cutting across the region also may lead to the division of the region. The Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis will not allow this to happen and we believe that we could play an effective role in the progress of the Pipeline Working Group.

### *Affected Community*

The discussion of concepts of resource sharing implies that a community that will be affected by a major resource development project may align itself with another community to intervene in bringing their support or non-support to the leadership level. The point is that not one community in the Deh Cho should be in a unilateral position to approve a major resource development project in the region. Such have been the connotations towards defining 'affected community'. In the context of the proposed pipeline, the immediate communities situated along the proposed pipeline corridor are categorized as the 'Pipeline Working Group'.

### *Pipeline Working Group*

Presently, Kakisa, Trout Lake Dene Band, Jean Marie River First Nation, Lidlil Kue First Nation, Fort Simpson Metis Nation, and Peahdzhel First Nation comprise the Pipeline Working Group. The Pipeline Working Group was established as a working group under the leadership.

The task of the Pipeline Working Group is to research and analyse the proposed pipeline, gather information and build internal consensus to bring to the larger leadership forum. At the leadership level, it is anticipated that the discussions of the proposed pipeline will be predicated on the merits of support or non-support and within the parameters of the 2001 Wrigley Special Assembly Resolution. Yet the Deh Cho First Nations is facing the biggest challenge to unity brought on by the pipeline. Whether the pipeline will serve as a panacea for a united strength or the fracturing of the region is the critical issue at this time.

Fort Liard, Hay River Reserve, West Point, Nahanni Butte Dene Band, and Fort Providence are not included within the Pipeline Working Group. The Deh Cho Region remains divided on the issue of supporting or not supporting the proposed pipeline. The Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis are a directly impacted community and will become part of the Pipeline Working Group.

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CONCLUSION

The Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and the Fort Providence Metis clearly belong in the Pipeline Working Group as the pipeline right of way will cross our traditional territory and deeply affect our watershed.

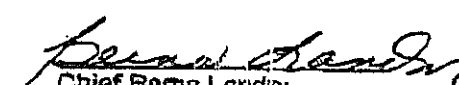
The traditional territory of the Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis will be impacted by the proposed pipeline. The transportation of the pipeline supplies on the river and highway system and the construction of the proposed pipeline will cross the southeast portion of the Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis traditional territory.


The Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis therefore must be included as an affected community of the proposed pipeline. We need to be immediately consulted and informed of the proposed pipeline. We need to be involved in the discussions of the proposed pipeline and assess our support or non-support for our ultimate consent and approval of the proposed pipeline on our traditional territory. We need to be involved in the consultation and regulatory review process for the proposed pipeline.

The Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis must be involved as an affected community in the Pipeline Working Group. As participants, the Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis will ensure that the environmental and socio-economic impacts that the pipeline will bring to our traditional territory and community will be discussed and our concerns addressed. More importantly, we believe that the Deh Cho First Nations values and principles must be maintained and major decisions are consistent with the August 2001 Wrigley Special Assembly Resolutions.

The Deh Gah Got'ie Dene and Fort Providence Metis will play an active part in the discussions of the Pipeline Working Group. We will assist in the development of a Deh Cho First Nation "official" position and we will be there at the table to voice our concerns and protect our traditional land use area along with all other directly impacted communities, in accordance with the agreed upon Deh Cho Process. Finally, just because the pipeline crosses a distant corner of our traditional land use area does not make us any less impacted. This is especially important since the pipeline severely impacts over half of our watershed and the transportation of the pipeline and associated supplies will pass right before our community.

At this point, although Fort Providence is directly impacted we have no say. All the Pipeline Working Group information is confidential. We are not recognized as a corridor community by industry and governments and we insist on changing that. The best way to change that is with Deh Cho First Nations leadership support and we sincerely hope we can count on that.

  
Chief Berna Landry  
Deh Gah Got'ie Dene Council

  
President Albert Lafferty  
Fort Providence Metis Nation