



FEB 14 2017

NT716

Chief Peter Marcellais
Nahanni Butte Band
General Delivery
NAHANNI BUTTE, NT X0E 0N0

Dear Chief Marcellais:

I am writing in response to the Nahanni Butte Dene Band's January 20th, 2017 letter to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board that was posted on their public registry for the environmental assessment of the Prairie Creek All Season Road Project (EA 1415-01).

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada has full confidence in the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board's environmental review process for the review of natural resource projects in the Mackenzie Valley region of the Northwest Territories. The department's role in this environmental assessment process is as the federal Minister responsible for the final decision on the report of environmental assessment under sub-section 130(1) of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada is subject to the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*, and the environmental review process, and cannot direct the Review Board to alter its process.

It is noted in your letter that you state that this review process is "open ended". Please note that the Review Board's assessment of this project is subject to the timelines of 16 months as required in section 128(2.1) of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*. This time allows the Board to consider information related to the Project in order to make its recommendation to the responsible Minister. This time is stopped, or "put on hold", when information is required from a project Proponent. Currently this assessment is within the required timelines.

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With regards to your comments related to “modernizing” the environmental assessment process, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada continues to engage with First Nations and northerners on amendments to the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*. The Nahanni Butte Dene Band is encouraged to participate in consultation on these amendments and bring forth your issues to the department for their consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Mohan Denetto
Regional Director General, NT Region
Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

c.c.:

Grand Chief Herb Norwegian
Grand Chief
Deh Cho First Nation

Mark Cliffe- Philips
Executive Director
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board

Matthew Spence
Director General
Northern Projects Management Office
Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency

Willard Hagen
Deputy Minister
Department of Lands
Government of the Northwest Territories