



Indian and Northern
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May 6, 2011

GKEIRP File Number: EIR 0607-001

Alan Ehrlich
Panel Manager
Gahcho Kué Environmental Impact Review Panel
PO Box 938
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P1

VIA E-MAIL

Re: Comments on draft Environmental Impact Review work plan

Dear Mr. Ehrlich,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the April 15, 2011 draft work plan for the Gahcho Kué Environmental Impact Review (EIR).

Information Request Process

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) wishes to see a fair, timely, and efficient EIR in which we are able to provide the Panel with sound technical advice based on a full understanding of the proposed development and its predicted impacts. To this end, INAC believes that parties should submit their information requests (IRs) to the Panel for review and approval, and that the Panel should organize the IRs before issuing them. If IRs are out of scope or unclear, or there is duplication amongst proposed IRs, the Panel is best placed to address these matters and ensure an efficient IR process. INAC will continue to monitor the EIR process, including the IR process, and raise any specific concerns with the Panel as required.

We are encouraged that the Panel will issue its own IRs, since in previous environmental assessments the Review Board's IRs have proven very useful to all parties. We are unclear, however, as to whether Round 1 is restricted to the Panel, or whether parties may also submit IRs during Round 1. We are also unclear as to whether the Panel intends to issue its own IRs during Round 2. Please clarify these points in the final work plan.

Since IRs may be directed to any party, we suggest replacing "the developer" with "the respondent" in section 4.2(3), sentence 3.

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Timelines

For the Panel's information, INAC intends to issue a call for proposals for participant funding in the near future.

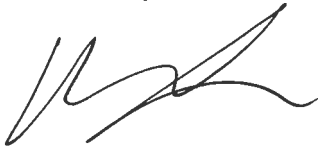
Based on the May 3, 2011 letter from DeBeers to the Panel, we understand that the conformity review for certain aspects of the Environmental Impact Statement will not be complete until July 15, 2011 at the earliest.

In the Appendix, the date for "technical sessions" should be changed to November 2011, and the date for "information requests round 2 preparation" should be changed to December 2011.

We anticipate that the Panel will issue more detailed timelines for the medium and long term as the EIR proceeds.

INAC looks forward to participating in this EIR. If you have any questions or concerns about the above, please contact me at (867) 669-2647 or Teresa.Joudrie@inac-ainc.gc.ca or Lionel Marcinkoski at (867) 669-2591 or Lionel.Marcinkoski@inac-ainc.gc.ca.

Sincerely,



Marc Lange
Teresa Joudrie
Director, Renewable Resources and Environment