

NORTH SLAVE METIS ALLIANCE

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May 15th, 2007

Mary Tapsell
Manager, EIA
Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board
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Re: Comments on the Gahcho Kue Panel Terms of Reference

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Gahcho Kue Environmental Impact Review Panel.

The North Slave Metis Alliance (NSMA) has the mandate to assert and defend Métis Aboriginal rights protected under section 35 of the Constitution of Canada. The Canadian Constitution recognizes Métis people as one of the three groups of Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, distinct from all other First Nation people, Inuit or non-aboriginal people. The indigenous North Slave Métis People have their own history, culture, traditions, language and heritage. There have also been, and continue to be, significant differences in the way Canada has treated and does treat Métis, as compared to Dene First Nations, under the Indian Act, which has resulted in significantly different socioeconomic and cultural baseline conditions. It is extremely important that the baseline information on the North Slave Métis People be analyzed separately from other aboriginal or non-aboriginal inhabitants of the various communities.

NSMA notes that page 7 of the Terms of Reference requires consideration of impacts on Dene Water Rights and spiritual concerns, but does not include impacts to Métis water rights or spiritual concerns. The NSMA requests that Métis also be included in this statement to provide adequate reflection of our constitutional rights.

NSMA requests that the TOR, section 2.5.2 be amended to require that human health baseline conditions are reported separately for each geographic community as well as for each Aboriginal People. As well, all the information required under section 2.7 regarding social, economic, and cultural components should be broken down by Aboriginal People as well as by geographic community. This breakdown is necessary to identify, and address inequitable distribution of impacts.

Section 2.9, dealing with cumulative effects should also provide specific information regarding the impacts predicted to the North Slave Métis socioeconomic and cultural

environment, North Slave Métis heritage resources, and North Slave Métis visual and aesthetic resources as distinct from other Aboriginal and non-aboriginal environments and resources. This separation of data acknowledges and respects that these culturally defined values and perceptions of effects will vary between ethnic groups, and that information collected from one group can not validly be used to evaluate impacts to another group.

In section 4.2, dealing with the workplan, it appears that the wrong dates (years) have been used in Table #3.

Yours truly,

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