

November 19, 2018

To: Distribution List

## **Re: *Draft EA Initiation Guidelines for Developers of Major Projects - Public Review and Engagement Period***

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (the Review Board) is developing draft *Environmental Assessment Initiation Guidelines for Developers of Major Projects* (draft Guidelines) to describe the information needed to begin an environmental assessment (EA). Once fully developed, the guidelines will set clear expectations for the type of information and level of detail required from developers when projects are referred to EA. Ultimately, the goal of the guidelines is to facilitate a good understanding of a project proposal at the beginning of an EA to provide for:

- a better-informed scoping process to focus the EA on the issues that matter most;
- a shorter and more focussed Developer's Assessment Report; and
- a more efficient and effective EA process overall.

The draft Guidelines are being distributed for public review and comment, and to solicit interest from parties in further engagement opportunities.

The Review Board invites parties to familiarize themselves with the [draft Guidelines](#) and to:

- **contact the Review Board directly to discuss how your party would like to participate in future engagement** opportunities related to the draft Guidelines; and/or
- **provide comments on the content of the draft Guidelines and how the guidelines can best achieve their purpose and expected outcomes**, through the Review Board's [Online Review System](#).

### ***Draft Guidelines Development Process and Early Engagement***

The Review Board has been engaging parties to the EA process in a collaborative approach to introduce the purpose and proposed content of the draft Guidelines. Parties will continue to have opportunities to provide further input throughout the development of the draft Guidelines. This is consistent with the Review Board's general approach to public engagement and with the specific consultation requirements under section 120 of the MVRMA.

On May 7, 2018, the Review Board distributed a [Draft Guidelines Concept Paper](#) to parties to introduce the idea of the draft Guidelines, its purpose, content themes, proposed development process, and implications for the EA process. The Review Board then hosted a workshop on June 20, 2018 in Yellowknife, NT to receive early input from interested parties. The one-day workshop was attended by



over 60 participants from a wide range of organizations, EA participants, and co-management partners.<sup>1</sup>

The draft Guidelines was developed using both internal expertise and external input, and utilized resources such as:

- examples from other organizations who conduct EAs, and related resource management organizations;
- findings from an information gap analysis of past EAs;
- professional experience and emerging best practices; and
- early feedback from parties.

The Review Board is now initiating a public review and engagement period on the draft Guidelines.

| <b>Draft Guideline Development Process</b>  | <b>Date</b>               |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Distribution of Concept Paper (with invitation to workshop)  | May 7, 2018               |
| 2. Draft Guidelines development workshop in Yellowknife   | June 20, 2018             |
| 3. Distribution of draft Guidelines for public review and engagement period   | November 19, 2018         |
| 4. Engagement period  | <i>Now to Spring 2019</i> |
| 5. Deadline for written comments on Online Review System  | <i>TBD</i>                |
| 6. Board review of feedback from engagement and written comments, establishment of next steps in draft Guidelines development | <i>TBD</i>                |

### **Ongoing Engagement Plan**

The Review Board's objective during the review and engagement period is to provide parties with the opportunity to:

- review the concept, draft content, and expected outcomes of the draft Guidelines;
- collaborate through additional engagement opportunities; and
- provide comments to the Review Board.

Based on parties' interest, **the Review Board plans to facilitate additional engagement opportunities during the public review period over the coming months.** These engagement opportunities could be in the form of additional focussed workshop(s), topic-specific working groups, individual sessions, or other collaboration formats. The Review Board wants to ensure that parties who are interested in further collaboration can express how they would like to participate, in what capacity, and on what topics related to the draft Guidelines. **Pending feedback from parties, the Review Board will establish a schedule, and provide notice of specific future engagement opportunities. Additionally, the Review Board will set a deadline for the public commenting period on this version of the draft Guidelines.**

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<sup>1</sup> Draft Guidelines Workshop Report and Draft Guidelines Workshop Presentation available at [www.reviewboard.ca](http://www.reviewboard.ca).



Following your initial review of the draft Guidelines, **if you are interested in further engagement opportunities**, please contact the Review Board directly at [bwheler@reviewboard.ca](mailto:bwheler@reviewboard.ca) or [dstpierre@reviewboard.ca](mailto:dstpierre@reviewboard.ca).

In your correspondence, please note:

- what type of engagement opportunities your party is interested in;
- how you would like to participate; and
- what topics your party would like to discuss.

We will follow up with interested parties to discuss what engagement approaches might work best for you.

### ***Draft Guidelines Review Instructions***

The Review Board invites feedback on all parts of the draft Guidelines document, particularly sections that set out specific information requirements. We encourage reviewers to familiarize themselves with the intended purpose, goals, and proposed content of the draft Guidelines, and carefully consider the following:

- how the information being requested in the draft Guidelines will help your party identify priority issues and questions for the EA to focus on;
- what additional information should be required at the beginning of an EA;
- what information in the draft Guidelines may not be needed at the beginning of an EA, or for scoping, and when in the EA process it would best be provided; and
- how the Guidelines can best achieve their purpose and expected outcomes.

Reviewers are invited to submit comments on the draft Guidelines through the Review Board's Online Review System (ORS) **at any time** during the Review Board's engagement period. The Review Board will set a deadline for written comments, sometime after carrying out the additional engagement discussed above.

The Review Board's ORS can be accessed by following this [link](#).

If you have any questions regarding the draft Guidelines initiative, please contact Davin St. Pierre (867-766-7071 or [dstpierre@reviewboard.ca](mailto:dstpierre@reviewboard.ca)) or Brett Wheler (867-766-7072 or [bwheler@reviewboard.ca](mailto:bwheler@reviewboard.ca)).