



August 5, 2022

Joelle Crook
Science Analyst, Northern Affairs Organization
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
Government of Canada
By email to: Joelle.crook@rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca

Dear Ms. Crook,

Re: Chamber of Mines response to the RSEA for the Slave Geological Province

Thank you for the week's extension to provide us with time to enable this response to help inform recommendations to the Minister of Northern Affairs on whether or not to initiate a Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment (RSEA) in the Slave Geological Province (SGP) under Part 5.2 of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*.

We have had the opportunity to participate in the workshop and to look at the workshop report, and provide the following thoughts broken under four categories:

RSEA Rationale/Purpose

- It is apparent from the workshop that the many affected parties with interests in the SGP do not currently share a common view of the need for an RSEA or the process to be followed. While the workshop was a good first step, it was clear that there is a substantial amount of work to be done up front before determining whether to proceed and that there are a number of other parties that need to be engaged. For an RSEA to be successful (i.e., useful), there needs to be strong alignment amongst the parties responsible for land and resource management and decision making in the proposed RSEA area. The RSEA therefore needs to be guided by a clear mission statement that outlines the problem to be addressed and defines the purpose of the RSEA. Roles and responsibilities will need to be clearly defined; particularly, who would lead.

Outcomes of RSEA

- The Slave Geological Province holds tremendous potential mineral resources that are needed to support energy transition and the economic future of NWT, Nunavut and Canada more broadly. As it stands, the SGP has been, is, and can continue to be a foundation for the NWT's private sector economy. This is very worthy of protecting. A RSEA for this region therefore needs to set an economic vision by providing increased certainty to developers regarding the design and locations of proposed projects that can successfully advance through the applicable project-specific approvals processes in this region.
- A successful RSEA would substantially address regional issues; particularly those that are cross-jurisdictional and lay out a clear process for addressing these broader regional issues in the context of project-specific approvals processes.

- It is well understood that the NWT and Nunavut are challenged by a very large infrastructure deficit that necessarily requires large linear infrastructure projects to improve access to ground transportation, grid power and telecommunications. A successful RSEA would also improve guidance on how these large regional projects that are required can be developed and approved in an efficient manner. A key piece of this would be to strengthen alignment and collaboration between Indigenous governments, the territorial governments and Canada in relation to transformative infrastructure projects.

Structure of RSEA

- To be successful, the RSEA must have meaningful participation from all parties with responsibilities for land and resource management within the SGP.
- The linkage and connections to land claim agreements, land use plans (existing and in progress) must be clearly defined and communicated.
- The application of the RSEA to land and resource decision making must be clearly defined from the outset.
- Until an RSEA is completed – should that be the decision – the current regulatory regime would continue to function using established processes and procedures.

Next Steps

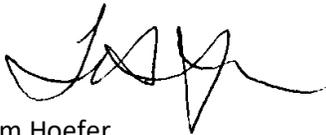
- Identify who will lead the RSEA
- Identify all parties with land and resource management responsibilities and confirm alignment with the purpose of the RSEA and commitment to participating in the RSEA process.
- Develop governance and management structures with appropriate representation from key stakeholders, including Indigenous governments and development corporations and industry.
- Develop communication and collaboration strategy to facilitate linkages to other parallel processes and ensure that all interested/affected parties are kept apprised of RSEA progress and opportunities for input/participation
- Cast a wide net for data collection and ensure transparency wrt to data access and methods of data analysis and modelling

The economic futures of the NWT and Nunavut have much riding on getting this right.

We hope this is helpful to the Minister's deliberations.

Yours truly,

NWT & NUNAVUT CHAMBER OF MINES



Tom Hoefler
Executive Director

c.c.: Joanna Ankersmit, Director General, Environment and Renewable Resources Directorate
Pamela Strand, Deputy Minister, NWT Industry, Tourism & Investment
Menzie McEachern, Assistant Deputy Minister, NWT Industry, Tourism & Investment
Lisa Dyer, Director General, CanNor Northern Projects Management Office