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by EMAIL

**Request to Share Views on Tłıchǫ Government Request for a Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment in the Slave Geological Province**

I am writing on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) in response to your July 13, 2022, request for feedback on the Tłıchǫ Government's request to conduct a regional strategic environmental assessment (RSEA) in the Slave Geological Province (SGP) under the regional studies provisions of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (MVRMA).

As previously communicated, the GNWT's opinion of whether or not a RSEA should proceed in the SGP must consider the views and considerations put forward by Indigenous governments. Before developing final considerations on some of the questions in your July 13 request, the GNWT would like to hear these views and also seek input from Members of the Northwest Territories' Legislative Assembly. This letter outlines some of GNWT's key interests and considerations on this matter, including previous public statements and relevant Mandate commitments and priorities. GNWT will review all the responses to your July 13 request from all parties and share additional information with CIRNAC, if required.

**GNWT participation**

If an RSEA in the SGP proceeds, GNWT will participate actively in all phases of the assessment incorporating the full scope of GNWT interests and authorities in the region, including any discussions regarding a potential RSEA governance structure. GNWT sees the benefits of an RSEA in providing guidance to and informing the efficient advancement of future developments and activities in the region, while ensuring they are undertaken in an environmentally responsible manner. This, of course, is provided that an RSEA would be conducted in a focussed and efficient manner within a defined time frame.

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While the June 22-23 workshop hosted by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board generated many useful learnings, GNWT observes that a successful RSEA would require additional multilateral discussions to reach common understanding on matters such as:

- the goals and purposes, including agreement on the specific challenge(s) to be addressed by the RSEA;
- the geographical scope, including whether it should focus primarily on the NWT portions of the SGP or include Nunavut portions of the SGP;
- funding for the RSEA process and participation of Indigenous Governments, organizations and the public;
- consideration on timing/duration to complete;
- the governance structure;
- the composition of the committee described in Part 5.2 of the MVRMA;
- the intended outcomes/results, and their application in other resource management processes; and
- full consideration of existing information.

### **GNWT interests and considerations**

As stated publicly, GNWT expects that any RSEA would include opportunities for meaningful Indigenous and public participation, and that the Government of Canada would provide participant funding.

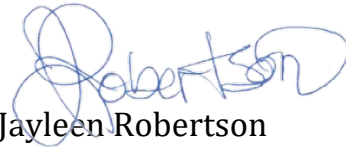
GNWT Mandate commitments directly relevant to a potential RSEA in the SGP include advancing the Slave Geological Province Corridor Project and increasing resource exploration and development. GNWT understands and supports discussions at the Mackenzie Valley Impact Review Board workshop that clarified that if an RSEA advances, individual projects and activities can continue to advance concurrently. It is important to the GNWT that the area remains open for development during the RSEA. In the GNWT's view, if an RSEA was completed, it could potentially provide clarity and standard guidance or conditions that would then improve efficiencies in project specific environmental assessment and regulatory processes for future proposed activities in the region.

GNWT is also interested in the implications of conducting an RSEA in the SGP on other GNWT Mandate commitments and priorities such as ensuring climate change impacts are considered in government decision making, land use planning, ongoing cumulative impacts monitoring, and the implementation of the Recovery Strategy for Barren-ground Caribou in the NWT and the Bathurst Caribou Management Plan. An extensive amount of information already exists in the SGP, and an RSEA should consider this prior work.

**Next steps**

The GNWT would be pleased to participate in further discussions on this matter and looks forward to hearing the views and perspectives of others. If CIRNAC has questions about this submission, please contact Ms. Lorraine Seale, Director of Securities and Project Assessment, Department of Lands at [Lorraine Seale@gov.nt.ca](mailto:Lorraine.Seale@gov.nt.ca) or (867) 767-9180 ext. 24020.

Sincerely,



Jayleen Robertson  
Assistant Deputy Minister,  
Planning and Coordination  
Lands