



The Review Board recommends Sidon International's proposed mineral exploration at Defeat Lake be given conditional approval

YELLOWKNIFE – On February 6th, 2008 the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (Review Board) recommended in its Report of Environmental Assessment that Sidon International Resources' proposed mineral exploration program be approved only if the mitigation measures outlined in the Review Board's recommendation are implemented.

Sidon International Resources' proposed development involves drilling up to three holes on a mineral claim at Defeat Lake located about 20 kilometres inland of the north shore of Great Slave Lake between Wool Bay and Drybones Bay. The developer proposed using a drill that could be moved by helicopter as well as building a new 22 kilometre winter road, from the shore to Defeat Lake. The Review Board acknowledges that while there are likely no significant biophysical impacts from the proposed development, any additional activity in the area raises many social and cultural issues that need to be addressed.

The Review Board recommended to the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs that the project be approved only if the following measures are implemented in order to prevent significant social and cultural impacts:

- To ensure identification of any heritage sites, all access routes and drill locations will be scouted in advance by an Aboriginal Elder and an archaeologist to identify possible heritage resource sites.
- To prevent harming any heritage site, no part of the development will happen within 100 meters of any known or suspected archaeological, burial or cultural site.
- The company will only be allowed to use helicopter access for this development instead of the proposed new winter road inland to Defeat Lake. The only exceptions will be for snowmobiles going to and from nearby camps. The Yellowknives Dene First Nation will have a role in choosing a good location for these camps.

To make its decision in this environmental assessment, the Review Board considered all the information that was placed on the public record. The Review Board heard from Aboriginal groups, government and members of the public throughout the course of the environmental assessment.

During a public hearing at Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, many participants expressed how important the area is to the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and other Aboriginal people. There

were concerns expressed about the development possibly disturbing heritage sites, including graves. Participants also described how their traditional harvesting activities are being impacted by activities such as other mineral development projects, and many recreational snowmobilers and hunters accessing the area from the nearby City of Yellowknife. Participants explained how the proposed project in combination with what is already happening in the area would result in a loss of the traditional value of the area.

The Review Board found that cultural impacts are being caused by the increasing number of developments, including the proposed project, in this important area. These impacts would be made worse if the proposed winter road to Defeat Lake is built.

If the federal and responsible ministers adopt the measures outlined in the Review Board's recommendation, the development can proceed to the regulatory phase where the measures will be incorporated in the licensing and permitting conditions issued by the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board and other regulators.

The Review Board's Report of Environmental Assessment and Reasons for Decision document is available online in the public registry for Sidon International Resources' EA0506-006 at mveirb.nt.ca

About the Review Board

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board was established by the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (MVRMA) in 1998 as an independent administrative tribunal responsible for the environmental impact assessment process in the Mackenzie Valley, Northwest Territories. As a co-management board, aboriginal land claim organizations nominate half of the board members, and the federal and territorial governments nominate the other half of the board members. The Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs appoints all members to the Review Board.

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