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Review Board releases External Environmental Assessment Review Report



Richard Edjericon, Chairperson holds Stantec's External Environmental Assessment Review Report

The Review Board is pleased to announce the release of an external report it commissioned to examine the environmental assessment process in the Mackenzie Valley. The report was prepared by Stantec Consulting Limited and focuses on opportunities to improve the timeliness of the Review Board's environmental assessment process.

The report was commissioned as the first step in the Review Board's work to address criticism by industry and others that the regulatory system governing land and water resources in the Mackenzie Valley is unnecessarily increasing in complexity and length. Stakeholders have raised concerns that environmental assessments have now become onerous for all participants from the perspective of work load and available resources. The Review Board is very aware of those concerns and made timeliness of the environmental assessment process the top priority in its latest three year strategic plan.

The first step the Review Board took was to hire Stantec Consulting Ltd. to provide its perspective on improving timeliness in the environmental assessment process. By hiring Stantec, the issue of process timeliness was examined with "new eyes".

The Stantec Report is now completed and available at: reviewboard.ca/news. In its report, Stantec identified several areas with room for improvement. Some are within the Review Board's control, others require collaboration of parties, and some involve legislative change.

The main recommendations focus on improving scoping efficiency, developing a defined process for referrals to environmental impact reviews, developing environmental assessment processes for large versus small projects, improving guidance materials and implementing rules based timelines.

The Review Board is reviewing these recommendations along with its own internal analysis and will be initiating improvements within its authority to change. More information on the nature and timing of process improvements will be shared with stakeholders in the coming weeks.



Ongoing environmental assessments

Click headings to visit the Review Board's public registry for that particular assessment

Diamond Exploration - Alex Debogorski EA1112-001

Status: Preparing for the community hearing on October 12th-13th, 2011.

This diamond drilling exploration project is being proposed southeast of Burnt Island on Great Slave Lake, NT in the Drybones Bay area. A community hearing has been rescheduled for October 12th - 13th, 2011 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The pre-hearing conference took place on October 3rd at 9:00am in the Review Board's boardroom. Parties' presentations are due on October 6th at noon.

Thor Lake Rare Earth Elements Project - Avalon Rare Metals Inc. EA1011-001

Status: Conformity review underway. Review Board analysing developer's response to deficiency statement

This proposed rare earth element mining project is at Thor Lake, 100 kilometres southeast of Yellowknife on the north side of Great Slave Lake. The development includes a hydro-metallurgical facility at the former Pine Point mine site on the south side of the lake. On September 9th, 2011, the developer submitted its deficiency statement response. The Review Board is currently analysing the response.

NICO Project - Fortune Minerals Ltd. EA0809-004

Status: Parties preparing proposed information requests. Due October 7th, 2011.

This proposed open pit and underground cobalt-gold-bismuth mine is approximately 50 kilometres northeast of Whati. Parties are reviewing the Developer's Assessment Report and preparing their proposed information requests, which are due October 7th, 2011.

Yellowknife Gold Project - Tyhee NWT Corporation EA0809-003

Status: Developer preparing information request responses.

This is a proposed open pit gold mine 88 kilometres north of Yellowknife, near the former Discovery Mine site. On August 23rd, 2011 the Review Board issued a number of information requests to the developer related to water quality. The developer is now preparing its responses.

Prairie Creek Mine - Canadian Zinc Corporation EA0809-002

Status: Review Board is preparing its Report of Environmental Assessment

This is a proposed underground lead-zinc mine in the Mackenzie Mountains within the South Nahanni River watershed, and the Nahanni National Park Reserve. Parties and the developer have made their final submissions. The Review Board is now considering the evidence on the public record and preparing its Report of Environment Assessment for the proposed Prairie Creek Mine.



Ongoing environmental assessments

Giant Mine Reclamation and Remediation Project - Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada EA0809-001

Status: Preparing for technical sessions to be held October 17th - 21st, 2011.

The Contaminants and Remediation Directorate of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada is proposing to remediate and reclaim the Giant Mine site within the City of Yellowknife. The development includes the future disposition of 237,000 tonnes of arsenic trioxide currently stored underground and 16 million tonnes of contaminated surface tailings. Technical sessions are being planned for October 17th - 21st, 2011.

Mineral Exploration Program - Encore Renaissance Resources. EA0506-005

Status: Report of EA issued in November 2007. Ministers referred the decision back to the Review Board for further consideration in April 2010. Parties preparing undertakings from the hearing, due October 4th, 2011.

This is a proposed diamond exploration program in the area of Drybones Bay. In November 2007, the Review Board recommended the federal and responsible ministers allow the development to proceed to the regulatory phase, subject to the measures outlined in the Review Board's Report of Environmental Assessment. In April 2010, the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, on behalf of responsible ministers, referred the Report of Environmental Assessment back to the Review Board for further consideration.

The Review Board held a two day public hearing as part of the "further consideration" proceeding on September 12th and 13th, 2011. Parties have until October 4th, 2011 to submit undertakings arising from the hearing. Following this, the Review Board will begin its deliberations on the issues under further consideration.

Representatives from Yellowknives Dene Band presented to the Review Board on September 12th and 13th at the Encore Renaissance Resources (formerly Consolidated Goldwin Ventures) public hearing for the further consideration proceedings





Ongoing environmental impact review

Gahcho Kué Diamond Mine - De Beers Canada Inc. EIR0607-001

Status: AANDC has awarded participant funding. Panel is preparing for EIS analysis sessions planned for late November

The proposed development is a large open-pit diamond mine approximately 180 km northeast of Yellowknife, NT. The Review Board established the Gahcho Kué Panel to evaluate the impacts of this development. On September 21st, 2011, AANDC awarded participant funding for the review. The Panel is now preparing for EIS analysis sessions, planned for late November. A copy of the workplan for the impact review can be found online by clicking here: [Gahcho Kue EIR workplan](#)

Ministers preparing response

Mineral Exploration Program - Sidon International Resources Corp. EA0506-006

Status: Report of EA issued in February 2008. The federal and responsible ministers preparing response.

This is a proposed mineral exploration program at Defeat Lake. In February 2008, the Review Board recommended the federal and responsible ministers allow the proposed development to proceed to the regulatory phase, subject to the measures in the Review Board's Report of Environmental Assessment and Reasons for Decision. In May 2010, the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs advised the Review Board that the federal and responsible ministers need more time to review the report.

Environmental assessment adjourned

Taltson Hydroelectric Expansion Project - Dezé Energy Corporation Ltd. EA0708-007

Status: Report of EA issued March 2010. Ministers referred the decision back to the Review Board for further consideration in December 2010. Temporarily adjourned March 2011 at the request of the developer.

This development is a proposed expansion to add 35 megawatts of power generating capacity to the Taltson Twin Gorges Plant, and includes a 690 kilometre transmission line to the diamond mines. The Review Board approved the development with measures to mitigate environmental and cultural impacts. In December 2010, the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, on behalf of responsible ministers, referred the Report of Environmental Assessment back to the Review Board for further consideration. However, in March 2011 the Review Board granted an adjournment at the request of the developer.

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