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June 3, 2024

File: S24S-002

Mark Cliffe-Phillips  
Mackenzie Valley Review Board  
200 Scotia Centre  
Box 938, 5102-50th Avenue  
Yellowknife NT X1A 2N7

Sent by email

Dear Mark Cliffe-Phillips,

**Re: North-Wright Airways Ltd. – Notice of Preliminary Screening Determination – Applications for Land Use Permit – Geotechnical Investigation – Norman Wells, NT**

The Sahtu Land and Water Board (Board) met on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 and considered the Application Package from North-Wright Airways Ltd. for Land Use Permit (Permit) S24S-002 for the Geotechnical Investigation in accordance with the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (MVRMA).

The Board conducted a preliminary screening based on the public record for the proceeding. Based on the evidence provided, the Board is satisfied the screening has been completed according to section 125 of the MVRMA and has decided **not to refer** the Project to environmental assessment. The Board's Preliminary Screening Determination and Reasons for Decision, as required by section 121 of the MVRMA, is attached.

If the Board does not receive notice of referral to environmental assessment, it can proceed with issuance of Permit S24S-002 on **June 14, 2024**.

The Board and staff look forward to continued communications throughout the pause period. Please contact Paul Dixon via [email](#) at (867) 598-2413 with any questions or concerns regarding this letter.

Yours sincerely,



Valerie Gordon,  
Chair Sahtu Land and Water Board

BCC'd to: Tulit'a Distribution list  
Travis Wright – President – North-Wright Airways Ltd.  
Steffen Karl – Senior Associate, Geotechnical and Materials Engineering Lead, Northern  
Canada – Stantec Architecture Ltd.

Attached: Preliminary Screening Determination and Reasons for Decision



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## Preliminary Screening Determination

Land Use Permit Application	
File Number	S24S-002
Company	North-Wright Airways Ltd.
Project	Geotechnical Investigation
Location	Norman Wells, NT
Activity	Geotechnical Drilling
Date of Decision	June 3, 2024

### 1.0 Decision

In accordance with subsection 124(1) of the [Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act](#) (MVRMA), the Sahtu Land and Water Board (SLWB or Board) met on June 3, 2024 to make a preliminary screening determination on the Application from North-Wright Airways Ltd. (North-Wright)(Applicant) for Land Use Permit S24S-002 (Permit)<sup>1</sup> for the Geotechnical Investigation at the North-Wright Hangar in Norman Wells, NT (Project).

The Board has decided not to refer the proposed Project to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (the Review Board) for Environmental Assessment because, based on the evidence, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed Project is not likely to have a significant adverse impact on air, water, and/or renewable resources, and will not be a cause of public concern.

The Board's determination, including reasons for its decisions, are detailed in sections [3.0](#) and [4.0](#).

<sup>1</sup>See SLWB Online Registry [www.slwb.com](http://www.slwb.com) for – [S24S-002](#) – June 3\_24

## 2.0 List of Defined Terms and Acronyms

Applicant	North-Wright Airways Ltd.
Application	The complete application package submitted by the Applicant for Land Use Permit S24S-002
Board	Sahtu Land and Water Board
CRP	Closure and Reclamation Plan
DGG	Délı̄ne Got'ine Government
EA/EIR	Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Review
ECCC	Environment and Climate Change Canada
GNWT	Government of the Northwest Territories
GNWT-ECC	Government of the Northwest Territories – Environment and Climate Change
MVLWB	Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board
MVRMA	<a href="#">Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act</a>
Minister	Minister of the Government of the Northwest Territories – Environment and Climate Change
ORS	Online Review System ( <a href="http://www.new.onlinereviewssystem.ca">www.new.onlinereviewssystem.ca</a> )
Party	As per the LWB <a href="#">Rules of Procedure</a> , an applicant, a person, or an organization participating in the regulatory proceeding for the Application.
Project	Geotechnical Investigation which is the proposed development (as defined in Part 5 of the MVRMA). <sup>2</sup>
Review Board	Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
SCP	Spill Contingency Plan
Standard Permit Conditions	LWB <a href="#">Standard Land Use Permit Conditions Template</a>
TK	Traditional Knowledge
WMP	Waste Management Plan

## 3.0 Background and Scope of Screening

On March 1, 2024, North-Wright Airways Ltd. applied for a Type A Land Use Permit for a Geotechnical Investigation (the Project) to support the design and construction of a new hangar at their location at 5 Canol Drive, Norman Wells, NT. The project is located within the municipal boundaries of Norman Wells, NT.

The new Project activities require screening by the Board in accordance with subsection 124(1) of the MVRMA.

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<sup>2</sup> “development” is defined in Part 5 of the [MVRMA](#) as:

“any undertaking, or any part or extension of an undertaking, that is carried out on land or water and includes an acquisition of lands pursuant to the *Historic Sites and Monuments Act* and measures carried out by a department or agency of government leading to the establishment of a park subject to the *Canada National Parks Act* or the establishment of a park under a territorial law.”

In accordance with paragraph 125(2)(a) of the [MVRMA](#), the Board must conduct a preliminary screening of the proposed Project to determine and report to the Review Board whether, in its opinion, the proposed Project is likely to have a significant adverse impact on air, water, and/or renewable resources, or might be a cause of public concern. The details of the Board's analysis are set out in section [4.0](#) below.

### **3.1 Scope of Screening:**

#### New Activities:

North-Wright Air has retained Stantec Architecture Ltd. (Stantec) to undertake geotechnical and structural engineering services for a new Hanger Building in Norman Wells, NT. Geotechnical recommendations for the building foundation and slab design will be required. As part of their application<sup>3</sup>, a Spill Contingency Plan, a Waste Management Plan, and an Engagement Plan were submitted. To date, there has not been any Land Use Permit in place for these activities.

The geotechnical investigation will be completed between four and seven days and will consist of:

- completing 5 boreholes with a track mounted solid stem auger drill rig to approximately 6 m depth
- boreholes will be logged based on visual, physical, and textural properties observed in the field
- representative grab samples will be collected directly off of the augers during the field drilling program
- the groundwater level within the boreholes will be recorded immediately after drilling is completed
- a thermistor will be installed in one of the boreholes for ground temperature monitoring purposes
- a standpipe monitoring well will be installed in another borehole for groundwater level monitoring
- the boreholes will be backfilled with a combination of auger cuttings and bentonite
- excess auger cuttings will be left at the borehole locations and the borehole coordinates will be recorded using a handheld GPS
- no camp is required and existing roads will be used for access to the site
- no brush or trees will be removed
- no fuel will be stored on site and slip tanks and vehicles will be fueled up at the existing fuel facilities in Norman Wells. The slip tank and pump will be used to refuel the drill rig while on site.
- limited garbage generated by the drilling program will be disposed of daily at the Norman Wells Solid Waste Disposal Facility or at the North-Wright Hangar.
- recyclable materials will be separated in blue bags and disposed at the appropriate collection centre
- if oily rags are produced, they will be transferred to the appropriate collection centre

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<sup>3</sup> Application Plans [S24S-002](#)

### 3.2 Public Record and Regulatory Proceeding

To assist the Board in its preliminary screening determination for the Project, the Board distributed the Application and a draft Permit for public review on April 23, 2024, inviting reviewers to provide comments and recommendations on the Applications and the preliminary screening (e.g., on impacts and mitigation measures) using the Online Review System (ORS). Comments were due May 10, 2024, with responses from the Applicant due May 20, 2024. The Board received comments and recommendations from the Government of the Northwest Territories – Environment and Climate Change (GNWT-ECC) and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) (attached).<sup>4</sup>

Since there were no requests to extend the reviewer comment deadline, the Board is satisfied that a reasonable period of notice was given to affected communities and First Nations, as required by subsection 63(2) of the [MVRMA](#).

The Board is also satisfied that notice of the Application was provided to the Délı̄ne Got'ine Government (DGG) and that a reasonable period of time was provided for the DGG to make representations to the Board in accordance with section 63 of the [MVRMA](#).

### 4.0 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigations

The Board has determined that the Project requires a preliminary screening and considered the potential impacts and proposed mitigations in establishing the Permit conditions. For Board licences and permits in general, potential impacts can be mitigated through standard, and/or project-specific licence and/or permit conditions. These conditions may include requirements for management and monitoring plans that provide detailed information regarding the implementation of mitigation measures and the evaluation of their effectiveness.

All Parties have had an opportunity to provide recommendations to the Board regarding draft conditions. In finalizing the conditions, the Board will consider these recommendations and all of the evidence provided through the regulatory proceeding.

Table 1 below summarizes:

- the potential impacts of the proposed Project;
- the concerns that were identified during the regulatory proceeding and how the Applicant addressed those concerns;
- the proposed and potential mitigations for the potential impacts; and
- the Board's analysis of the potential impacts and proposed mitigations.

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<sup>4</sup> See SLWB Online Registry for [Review Summary Table](#) – May 20\_24

**Table 1: Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigations for the Proposed Project**

Potential Impact	Activity	<p align="center"><b>Proposed Mitigations</b></p> <p align="center"><i>Description of measures to reduce potential impacts, including consideration of cumulative impacts and climate change.</i></p>	Board Analysis and Determination
<p>Soil contamination</p> <p>Soil compaction</p> <p>Destabilization / Erosion</p> <p>Change in soil structure</p> <p>Loss or change in Permafrost</p>	<p>Transfer, storage, and use of petroleum products and/or chemicals</p> <p>Use of motorized and heavy equipment</p> <p>Stripping of Overburden</p> <p>Drilling localized boreholes</p>	<p>The Applicant proposed the following mitigations in the Application and in responses to review comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Follow the Spill Contingency Plan in the event of a spill</li> <li>o Handle petroleum products using best spill prevention practice (drip trays, etc).</li> <li>o Use existing roadways to prevent compaction</li> <li>o Backfill boreholes after drill completion</li> <li>o Complete daily inspections and regular maintenance on all equipment being used for the project</li> <li>o Use existing area footprints where possible</li> </ul> <p>The Board has standard permit conditions that are typically used to mitigate the identified potential impacts. These standard conditions include:<a href="#">11</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o USE APPROVED EQUIPMENT</li> <li>o LOCATION OF ACTIVITIES</li> <li>o CLEAN WORK AREA</li> <li>o NO SUMP</li> <li>o REPAIR EROSION</li> <li>o DRILLING WASTE DISPOSAL</li> <li>o EROSION CONTROL</li> <li>o DRILLING WASTE CONTAINMENT</li> <li>o WASTE CHEMICAL DISPOSAL</li> <li>o WASTE PETROLUEM DISPOSAL</li> <li>o REPAIR LEAKS</li> <li>o SECONDARY CONTAINMENT - REFUELING</li> <li>o FUEL CONTAINMENT</li> <li>o MAXIMUM FUEL ON SITE</li> <li>o SPILL CONTINGENCY PLAN</li> <li>o SPILL RESPONSE</li> <li>o DRIP TRAYS</li> </ul>	<p>Based on the described mitigations, it is the Board’s opinion that the proposed activities are not likely to have a significant adverse impact on air, water, and/or renewable resources, and will not be a cause of public concern.</p> <p>The Board’s opinion is based on a number of factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The small geographic size of the area likely to be affected by the impacts does not include ecologically sensitive areas;</li> <li>o The historical, cultural, and archaeological significance of that area, and/or impacts to traditional wildlife harvesting is low;</li> <li>o The cumulative impacts that could result from the impacts of the Project combined with those of any other project are considered low.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Project factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o There are minor infrastructure and size requirements for the Project;</li> <li>o The equipment being used is familiar;</li> <li>o Low volumes of hazardous chemicals and handling expected; and</li> <li>o Site access is not a concern.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Impact factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The nature, magnitude, and complexity of the impact is low;</li> <li>o The probability of the impact occurring is low;</li> <li>o The frequency and duration of the impact is limited;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ REPORT SPILLS</li> <li>○ CLEAN UP SPILLS</li> <li>○ FINAL CLEANUP AND RESTORATION</li> <li>○ PROGRESSIVE RECLAMATION</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The reversibility of the impact is possible; and/or</li> <li>○ Changes to community social structure to stress on existing social services resulting from the impact are not expected.</li> <li>● The potential effects of climate change on the impact and associated mitigation measure(s) is low;</li> <li>● The effectiveness and reliability of the proposed mitigation measures, including possible conditions suffice.</li> </ul>
<p>Infiltration Changes</p> <p>Changes in Water Quality</p>	<p>Drilling boreholes creates a conduit</p> <p>Shallow ground water may or may not be present</p>	<p>The Applicant proposed the following mitigations in the Application and in responses to review comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The boreholes will be backfilled with bentonite</li> <li>○ Any groundwater encountered in the borehole will be backfilled with bentonite, if not a monitoring well location</li> <li>○ A groundwater monitoring well will be installed</li> </ul> <p>The Board has standard licence conditions that are typically used to mitigate the identified potential impacts. These standard conditions include:<sup>21</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ USE APPROVED EQUIPMENT</li> <li>○ CLEAN WORK AREA</li> <li>○ FLOWING ARTESIAN WELL</li> <li>○ NO SUMP</li> <li>○ FINAL CLEANUP AND RESTORATION</li> <li>○ PROGRESSIVE RECLAMATION</li> </ul>	<p>Based on the described mitigations, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed activities are not likely to have a significant adverse impact on air, water, and/or renewable resources, and will not be a cause of public concern.</p> <p>The Board's opinion is based on a number of factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Location factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The small geographic size of the area likely to be affected by the impacts does not include ecologically sensitive areas;</li> <li>○ The historical, cultural, and archaeological significance of that area, and/or impacts to traditional wildlife harvesting is low;</li> <li>○ The cumulative impacts that could result from the impacts of the Project combined with those of any other project are considered low.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Project factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There are no impacts expected to the groundwater;</li> <li>○ Limited volume of chemicals to be used;</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Impact factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The nature, magnitude, and complexity of the impact is low;</li> <li>○ The probability of the impact occurring is low;</li> <li>○ The frequency and duration of the impact is limited;</li> <li>○ The reversibility of the impact is possible; and/or;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Changes to community social structure to stress on existing social services resulting from the impact are not expected.</li> <li>● The potential effects of climate change on the impact and associated mitigation measure(s) is low;</li> <li>● The effectiveness and reliability of the proposed mitigation measures, including possible conditions suffice.</li> </ul>
Changes in Air Quality Increased Greenhouse Gases	Use of heavy equipment  Driving to/from site	<p>The Applicant proposed the following mitigations in the Application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Drilling equipment use and truck use for travel air emissions will be temporary and localized.</li> </ul> <p>The Board has standard licence conditions that are typically used to mitigate the identified potential impacts. These standard conditions include:<a href="#">4</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ LOCATION OF ACTIVITIES</li> <li>○ USE APPROVED EQUIPMENT</li> </ul>	<p>Based on the described mitigations, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed activities are not likely to have a significant adverse impact on air, water, and/or renewable resources, and will not be a cause of public concern.</p> <p>The Board's opinion is based on a number of factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Location factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The small geographic size of the area likely to be affected by the impacts does not include ecologically sensitive areas;</li> <li>○ The cumulative impacts that could result from the impacts of the Project combined with those of any other project are considered low.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Project factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Changes to community social structure to stress on existing social services resulting from the impact are not expected;</li> <li>○ The scale of the project is small and localized.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The potential effects of climate change on the impact and associated mitigation measure(s) is low;</li> <li>● The effectiveness and reliability of the proposed mitigation measures, including possible conditions suffice.</li> </ul>

<p>Introduction of non-native (invasive) species</p> <p>Injury to Wildlife</p> <p>Disturbance to animal lifecycle stages (breeding, feeding, nesting, staging)</p> <p>Effects on wildlife health</p>	<p>Equipment or trucks coming from other sites</p> <p>Injury on roadways during equipment mobilization / demobilization</p> <p>Garbage as attractant</p> <p>Noise disturbance during drilling</p>	<p>The Applicant proposed the following mitigations in the Application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Equipment will arrive to site in clean condition, free of debris on tracks and undercarriage</li> <li>○ Work likely to occur during winter months, when wildlife activity is reduced</li> <li>○ The Spill Contingency Plan will be followed to reduce chance of spills</li> <li>○ The work is localized and small scale</li> </ul> <p>The Board has standard licence conditions that are typically used to mitigate the identified potential impacts. These standard conditions include:<sup>[1]</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ HABITAT DAMAGE</li> <li>○ LOCATION OF ACTIVITIES</li> <li>○ USE APPROVED EQUIPMENT</li> <li>○ FINAL CLEAN UP AND RESTORATION</li> <li>○ PROGRESSIVE RECLAMATION</li> <li>○ WASTE MANAGEMENT</li> <li>○ CLEAN WORK AREA</li> </ul>	<p>Based on the described mitigations, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed activities are not likely to have a significant adverse impact on air, water, and/or renewable resources, and will not be a cause of public concern.</p> <p>The Board's opinion is based on a number of factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The small geographic size of the area likely to be affected by the impacts does not include ecologically sensitive areas;</li> <li>○ The cumulative impacts that could result from the impacts of the Project combined with those of any other project are considered low.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Project factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The scale of the project is small and localized.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The potential effects of climate change on the impact and associated mitigation measure(s) is low;</li> <li>• The effectiveness and reliability of the proposed mitigation measures, including possible conditions suffice.</li> </ul>
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<sup>[1]</sup> See the SLWB Policies and Resources webpage to access the LWB [Standard Water Licence Conditions Template](#)

#### 4.1 Consideration of Potential Impacts

Based on the potential impacts and proposed mitigations identified above in Table 1, the Board considered whether the Project is likely to have a significant adverse impact on air, water, and/or renewable resources. In general, impacts of the Project on the air, water, and/or renewable resources can be mitigated through the use of standard permit conditions and/or project-specific conditions established by the Board as per the LWB [Standard Process for Creating New Conditions](#). These conditions may include requirements for management and monitoring plans that provide detailed information regarding the implementation of mitigation measures and the evaluation of their effectiveness.

A draft Permit was circulated for review during the regulatory proceeding, and all Parties were given the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations on the draft conditions. In finalizing the conditions, the Board will consider all of the evidence provided through the regulatory proceeding.

#### 4.2 Consideration of Public Concern

In addition to considering the potential impacts of the Project, the Board considered whether the Project might be a cause of public concern. Based on the evidence provided during the regulatory proceeding thus far, the Board did not identify any comments or issues that indicate that the Project is a cause of public concern.

#### 5.0 Conclusion

The Board has reviewed all the evidence received during the regulatory process with respect to the Preliminary Screening of the proposed Project. Based on the evidence, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed Project is not likely to have a significant adverse impact on air, water, and/or renewable resources, and will not be a cause of public concern, as set out in paragraph 125(2)(a) of the [MVRMA](#). The Board has therefore decided not to refer the proposed Project to Environmental Assessment.

If the Board does not receive a notice of referral to environmental assessment by June 13, 2024, the Board can issue the Permit on June 14, 2024.



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**Valerie Gordon, Chair Sahtu Land and Water Board**

June 3, 2024

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**Date**