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Robert Greenly
President
Kitikmeot Inuit Association
P.O Box 6, 30B Mitik Street
Cambridge Bay, NU, X0B 0C0

Dustin Fredlund
Chief Operating Officer
Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
P.O Box 638
Iqaluit, NU, X0A 0H0

Via Email: president@kitia.ca; DFredlund@tunngavik.com

Environmental Assessment of the proposed Mackenzie Valley Highway Project (MVEIRB File EA1213-02)

Purpose of this letter

Given your interest in and connection to barren ground caribou herds, particularly the Bluenose East herd, and given potential impacts to the herd, including adverse effects on your members' ability to exercise their s.35 rights to harvest caribou, Canada is reaching out to you regarding the proposed Mackenzie Valley Highway (MVH) Project.

The purpose of this letter is to:

1. Notify you of the upcoming steps of the environmental assessment process; and
2. Advise you that the Crown is relying, to the extent possible, on the Review Board's process to fulfill the Crown's duty to consult, and if appropriate, accommodate.

Background on the Project

The GNWT's Department of Infrastructure, acting as the developer, is proposing to advance the MVH Project; construction and operation of a 321 km all-season gravel highway between Wrigley and Norman Wells, NT.

The GNWT referred the Project to environmental assessment in 2013. The Review Board issued the current Terms of Reference for the Project in 2015. The Department of Infrastructure has reinitiated the Review Board's environmental assessment process with the submission of the Developer's Assessment Report on October 12, 2023.

Information on this environmental assessment is available on the Review Board's public registry at: <https://reviewboard.ca/registry/ea1213-02>.

Canada relies on the Review Board's process as the primary means to fulfill our consultation and accommodation obligations for our decision related to the environmental assessment of

the Project. By relying on the Review Board's process, we integrate the Review Board's interim engagement and consultation policy (<https://reviewboard.ca/reference-library-page/policies-and-standards>) with our approach.

Throughout the Review Board's process, Canada actively monitors and tracks all statements of adverse impacts on asserted or established Inuit and/or Inuvialuit rights made by Inuit and/or Inuvialuit governments and organizations. Any issues or feedback provided during the Review Board's environmental assessment process or received by Canada during the decision phase of the environmental assessment process will be given full and thorough consideration prior to any decision being made by Canada.

Next Steps

The Review Board have provided its current Draft Workplan for the MVH Project Assessment. It can be found on the Review Board's public registry at: <https://reviewboard.ca/registry/ea1213-02>.

Canada contacts

The Northern Projects Management Office of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency will be the consultation coordinator for Canada for the environmental assessment. If you have any questions for Canada, please contact Shannon Allerston, Project Manager, at shannon.allerston@cannor.gc.ca or 867-445-7230.

Sincerely,

Adrian Paradis
A/Director General
Northern Projects Management

c. Distribution List

Distribution List:

Joanna Ankersmit
Director General, Natural Resources and Environment Branch
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada

Hilary Oakman
A/Regional Director, Ecosystem Management
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Mary Taylor
Director General, Environmental Protection Operations Directorate
Environment and Climate Change Canada

Rinaldo Jeanty
Associate Assistant Deputy Minister of Lands and Mineral Sector
Natural Resources Canada

Shari Currie
Director General, Prairie and Northern Region,
Transport Canada

Ron Pankratz
A/Regional Director General
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada

Isabelle Lampron
A/National Director, Environmental Health Program
Health Canada

JoAnne Deneron
Chairperson
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board