



**Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board Public
Hearing, Norman Wells, NT
16-18 March 2004**

Mackenzie Gas Project Environmental Assessment

The Sahtu Renewable Resources Board (SRRB) was established as the main instrument of wildlife and forest management in the Sahtu Settlement Area (SSA). It is the responsibility of the SRRB and all other affected parties to unite to protect, conserve and manage, in a co-operative spirit, all renewable resources within the SSA in a sustainable manner to meet or exceed the needs of the public today and in the future. The SRRB is a regional public co-management board, thereby representing beneficiary as well as non-beneficiary and non-aboriginal populations of the SSA.

As stated in the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, Section 115 (a), the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board must ensure "the protection of the environment from the significant adverse impacts of proposed developments". The Board feels that there are too many unknowns for both scientific and traditional knowledge related to the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline that affects the ability to effectively determine the associated impacts.

Items listed below are issues of concern for the SRRB:

- Boreal Woodland Caribou are listed as "threatened" by COSEWIC and the majority of their habitat is found along the Mackenzie Valley.
- Currently, in the SSA, only one species management plan exists. Prepared by the Department of Resources, Wildlife & Economic Development – Inuvik and Sahtu Regions, the "Draft Co-Management Plan for the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West and Bluenose-East Caribou Herds" is a cooperative agreement between government and users to effectively manage the caribou populations. The plan is set to expire at the end of March 2004,
- Recent surveys indicate that Bluenose-west Caribou are being found only in small, scattered groups in the SSA as compared to the past. Further studies are warranted to determine whether increased development activities in the area are affecting the herd.
- A substantial amount of subsistence harvest activities by Sahtu communities is along the Mackenzie Valley. By collecting subsistence harvest information through the Sahtu Settlement Harvest Study, the SRRB ensures the protection of Sahtu Dene and Metis harvesting traditions. The SRRB believes that it is essential that data collection continue to capture information about subsistence harvest through all pipeline and hydrocarbon development stages.
- Limited funding and capacity for traditional and scientific research in the SSA restricts both the Board and communities in determining impacts of development activities. The Mackenzie Valley Biophysical Information and Research Gaps Study, completed in December 2003, determined what information and research is needed to fill any gaps related to the preparation, regulation, and management of increased hydrocarbon exploration in the Mackenzie Valley and put together an action plan prioritizing the identified gaps. Of the 102 gaps identified, 48 were categorized as having immediate priority in terms of urgency of action.

The SRRB feels the above items and outstanding public concerns with the Mackenzie Gas Project Environmental Assessment to warrant its referral to a joint panel review.

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The Town of Norman
Mackenzie Gas Project

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- Social impacts resulting from an increase in alcohol and drug use. Anticipate increased alcohol/substance abuse, increased crime, sexually transmitted diseases will occur. Increased family violence, sexual assault and abuse are also anticipated.
- Demands on local emergency services (Health, Social Services, RCMP and Fire Department) will increase. As demand from industry increases, the availability of services to community residents is expected to decline.
- Increased cost of living and a decrease in available consumer goods and services is expected as residents and "the project" compete for available goods, labour and services and freight carriers.
- Increased safety concerns due to heavy vehicle/equipment traffic within the community and on the winter roads.
- High potential for employable youth to forgo educational commitments for seasonal employment opportunities, thereby decreasing their ability to secure permanent jobs which require high school education.
- Increased demand for municipal services and infrastructure including landfill access, water/sewage services, granular material supply and road use. Higher operational and maintenance costs for municipal infrastructure are anticipated which, if not compensated for by the project, will result in increased taxes to residents.
- Increased potential for environmental concerns - fuel spills, higher noise levels, increased emissions, impact to wildlife.
- Potential disruption to trapping and hunting routes/lifestyles.
- Increased, "immediate" demand for land purchase and development within the community.
- Lack of identified long-term benefit to the community including the identification of and commitment to permanent employment opportunities and new revenue streams.
- High potential for "post-construction" abandonment of infrastructure.
- Lack of identified training programs for northern residents to prepare for construction employment opportunities.
- A lack of clarity regarding jurisdictional/regulatory authorities related to pipeline construction/right of way access within municipal boundaries.