



Environment Canada
Environnement Canada

Environmental Protection Operations Directorate
Suite 301, 5204 - 50th Avenue
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December 11, 2006

Our File: 4708 001 040

Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
Box 938, 5102-50th Avenue
Yellowknife, NT
X1A 2N7

Attention: Martin Haefele
Environmental Assessment Officer

Re: EA0607-003 Ur Energy Uranium Exploration Screech Lake Information Requests

Please find attached Environment Canada's response to Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board's Information Request 0607-003-11 for the environmental assessment of Ur Energy Uranium Exploration Screech Lake (EA0607-003).

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (867) 669-4782 or lorraine.sawdon@ec.gc.ca with any questions or comments with regards to the foregoing.

Sincerely,

Lorraine Sawdon
Environmental Assessment Specialist
Environmental Protection Operations Directorate

Attach: EC's response to IR0607-003-11

cc: Stephen Harbicht (Head, Assessment & Monitoring, EPOD)
Mike Fournier (Northern Assessment Coordinator, EPOD)
Myra Robertson (Environmental Assessment Coordinator, CWS)

EA0607-003 Ur Energy Uranium Exploration Screech Lake
Information Requests

IR Number: IR0607-003-11

Source: Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation

To: Government of the Northwest Territories; re-directed to Environment Canada

Issue: Noise Impacts

Preamble: In Section 6 of the LUP application, for noise levels it states that "*noise levels are not expected to exceed 94 dBA at 10m beyond the drill rig and will be well below any current regulatory criteria*". In the Golder report (3.7.2.2), it states that "*while there are no published noise criteria in the NWT, the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board remote area criteria at 40 dBA at 1500m from activity is often used*".

Request: Please clarify what the current regulatory criteria are for noise levels, how they are determined, and if there are species-specific criteria. If no NWT specific criteria exists, please explain which other criteria may be used and how they are to the NWT in general and the Thelon area in particular.

Environment Canada (EC) Response:

There are no current regulatory requirements for noise in the NWT, nor are there any species-specific noise guidelines for species in the NWT. In the absence of any specific guidelines for the NWT, the proponent is correct in stating that the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (EUB) guidelines are often used in the NWT. The most current guidelines are the EUB Directive 38: Noise Control Directive User Guide (November 1999).

Note that the 40 dBA at 1500m standard in the EUB Directive 38 is a *minimum* target for industrial facilities in remote areas where ambient noise is 35 dBA. That standard should not be perceived as being connected to best practices or minimum impacts. Additionally, also note that EUB Directive 38 stipulates that noise levels should not be more than 5 dBA above ambient at 1500m. It is very likely that pristine areas have ambient noise levels below 35 dBA, likely around 20-30 dBA. In these pristine areas, following the spirit and intent of the EUB Directive 38 would require a quieter noise standard than 40 dBA at 1500m.

Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada (EC) has reviewed the scientific literature on the impact of noise on migratory birds. The published science on the impacts of noise on birds relates largely to waterfowl or songbirds. The effect of noise appears to vary by species, by noise level, and by type of noise. Noise has been shown to affect birds in a number of ways including:

- Reduced density of breeding, staging, or moulting birds,
- Increased proportion of younger breeding birds in the area which suggests lower habitat quality
- Increased proportion of unpaired birds which suggests lower quality habitat
- Movement of birds away from the noise source

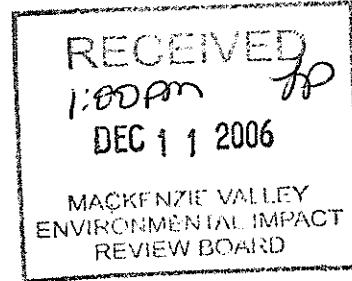
- Reduced body condition because of disturbance
- Changes in behaviour or song that could impact mating success, predator alerts, and other intraspecific communication

Based on a review of existing science, EC believes that noise levels above about 50 dBA may cause negative effects on migratory birds. Obviously, the best way to avoid any potential impacts to migratory birds from noisy activities such as drilling is to conduct these activities at times when migratory birds are not present in the area (such as during the winter).

FAX MESSAGE



**Prairie and Northern Region
5204 - 50th Avenue, Suite 301
Yellowknife, NT X1A 1E2**



DATE: December 11, 2006

Lorraine Sawdon

TO: Environmental Assessment Officer

Environmental Assessment

MVEIRB

Environment Canada

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Number of pages including cover: 4

Subject:

Please find enclosed Environment Canada's response to IR0607-003-11 for the environmental assessment of Ur-Energy Uranium Exploration Screech Lake (EA0607-003).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (867) 669-4782 or at lorraine.sawdon@ec.gac.ca

Sincerely,

Lorraine Sawdon
Environment Canada

Please contact (867) 669-4711 if this facsimile is not complete.