



June 28, 2013

By email: stoogood@reviewboard.ca

Mr. Simon Toogood
Environmental Assessment Officer
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
200-5102 50th Avenue
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
X1A 2N7

**RE: Mackenzie Valley Highway Project EA 1213-002 Request for comment from
Parties on issues scoping**

Dear Mr. Toogood,

I am writing on behalf of the federal Minister (FM) and responsible ministers (RMs) representing the Government of Canada, as Parties to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (Review Board)'s environmental assessment (EA) of the Mackenzie Valley Highway Project (Project), in response to your letter dated May 31, 2013, requesting comments on the issues scoping and terms of reference phases of the EA.

The FM and RMs have considered the proposal from the developer, the Department of Transportation of the Government of the Northwest Territories, to limit consultation with potentially affected communities to inviting written comments on issues scoping as well as allowing the developer to prepare a draft Terms of Reference, which will ultimately establish the scope of the EA.

Having examined the developer's previous community engagement, and in consideration of the Government of Canada's duty to consult, the FM and RMs find the proposed approach acceptable, on the condition that this approach is also acceptable to the Aboriginal Parties to the EA.

The Government of Canada is committed to undertaking effective and meaningful consultation with Aboriginal groups that may be adversely affected by the proposed project, and will use, to the extent possible, the Review Board's EA process and the Aboriginal engagement by the proponent as a means of fulfilling its duty to consult.

With regard to the Terms of Reference, the FM and RMs accept the suggested approach of allowing the developer to prepare a draft Terms of Reference for the Review Board's consideration provided that the draft Terms of Reference are distributed for review and comment by the Parties, prior to adoption by the Review Board, in keeping with the Review Board's normal practice of consultation throughout each phase of an EA.



Thank you for your consideration of these comments and if you have any questions, please contact David Alexander, Project Manager, at (867) 766-8436.

Sincerely,

Matthew Spence
Director General
Northern Projects Management Office

cc: Dahti Tsetso, Resource Management Coordinator
Dehcho First Nations

Fred Koe, Chief Operating Officer
Gwich'in Tribal Council

Catarina Owen, Environmental Assessment Researcher
Sahtu Renewable Resources Board

Tamara Hamilton, Environmental Policy Analyst
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

Rick Walbourne, Fisheries Protection Biologist
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Loretta Ransom, Senior Environmental Assessment Co-ordinator
Environment Canada

John King, Senior Environmental Assessment Coordinator
Natural Resources Canada

Meighan Andrews, Superintendent, EA North
Transport Canada