



Files: MV2011L2-0004 and EA201314-02

February 24, 2014

Re: Coordinated Process for the DeBeers Snap Lake Diamond Mine Water Licence Amendment Application and Environmental Assessment

The Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board (MVLWB) and the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (Review Board) are announcing the release of their coordinated draft Workplan for De Beers Canada Inc.'s (De Beers) Amendment Application for Water Licence MV2011L2-0004 and related Environmental Assessment EA201314-02 for the Snap Lake Diamond Mine, respectively.

On December 20, 2013, De Beers submitted the Amendment Application to the MVLWB. This proposed changes to some definitions and conditions, changes to the majority of its current effluent quality criteria, and changes to the total dissolved solids limit that was set in a measure of the environmental assessment conducted by the Review Board in 2003. On January 21, 2014, the MVLWB referred the Amendment Application to the Review Board under paragraph 126(2)(a) of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*. It did so based on the concerns expressed by the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and particularly on the submissions made about jurisdiction and process by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

In exercising its authority to refer the Amendment Application to environmental assessment, the MVLWB was restricted by the scope of the Application before it. Because De Beers chose to apply for a number of changes to the licence within the same Application, the MVLWB was required in its referral to send the entire Application to the Review Board.

In the MVLWB's view, the total dissolved solids and chloride components of the Application are matters identified by the reviewers that warrant careful attention. They relate to two of the Review Board's measures that were approved by the federal Minister in the environmental assessment completed in 2003. There are also a number of other changes proposed to the De Beers Water Licence that the Review Board may consider examining.

Further information on the water licence amendment application and reasons for referral can be found in the MVLWB [Reasons for Decision](#).



Due to the unique nature of the referral, the Review Board has drafted a scoping document for public review that will assist in defining which proposed changes may be considered within the Review Board's environmental assessment and which ones will be dealt with strictly through the MVLWB regulatory process. At the completion of the public review of this scoping document, the Review Board will issue a Scoping Reasons for Decision that will be used instead of a Terms of Reference. The Review Board usually requests a developer to produce a Developers Assessment Report based on the Terms of Reference. In this environmental assessment process the Review Board will use the water licence Amendment Application and supplementary documents as a substitute for the Developers Assessment Report.

As set out in the Workplan, the MVLWB and Review Board will run concurrent processes until the completion of the Technical Session phase. All evidence up until this point will be used by both boards for their individual processes and will ultimately be posted on both public registries. At the completion of the Technical Session phase, the Review Board will run an independent public hearing phase prior to releasing its Report of Environmental Assessment. Once the Report of Environmental Assessment is approved by the responsible Minister, the MVLWB will begin its Public Hearing phase.

It is anticipated that the process outlined within the draft Workplan will be timely and efficient, while still providing ample opportunity for all parties and the public to review and bring evidence to both boards throughout the concurrent and independent phases of the processes.

For further questions regarding the processes outline within the draft Workplan, please contact Rebecca Chouinard (rchouinard@mvlwb.com) at the MVLWB or Simon Toogood (stoogood@reviewboard.ca) at the Review Board.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Hagen".

Willard Hagen
(MVLWB Board Chair)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard Edjericon".

Richard Edjericon
(MVEIRB Board Chair)