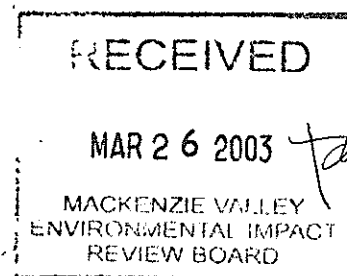


Fisheries
and OceansPêches
et OcéansFish Habitat Management
Suite 101, 5204-50th Avenue
Yellowknife, Northwest
Territories
X1A 1E2Your file *Votre référence*Our file *Notre référence*

SC00196

March 11, 2003

De Beers Canada Mining Inc.
300 5102-50th Avenue
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P8

Attention: Robin Johnstone, Senior Environmental Manager

Dear Robin:

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has reviewed the Report entitled, *Fish Habitat Information and Loss Accounting for Waterbodies Situated on the Northwest Peninsula of Snap Lake*, as submitted February 11, 2003.

Our further review of the Supporting Information as presented in the Environmental Assessment Report (EAR), Information Requests and the Technical Memoranda in consideration of seepage concerns and area of influence of the mine effluent has identified further deficiencies in fish habitat assessment.

These deficiencies were noted in **Section 2.3 Identification of Habitat Areas** of the DFO Technical Report submitted on February 14, 2003 and are listed below.

DFO's Position and Rationale

The areas of Snap Lake in the vicinity of the minewater discharge and wasterock pile seepage have not been adequately surveyed for their potential to support spawning of lake trout or other fish species. The EAR states that spawning areas are outside of any areas impacted by effluent discharges, but the only spawning areas identified in the report were located in the main area of Snap Lake to the Southeast of the proposed mine. There are potential spawning areas located on shoals much closer to the mine within the area of influence of the mine effluent, hence eggs and larval fish in these area may experience acute and chronic toxicity resulting from project-related water quality changes.

Spawning surveys were only undertaken to document lake trout spawning sites. Potential effects to spawning areas of other fish in Snap Lake, such as round whitefish and burbot are also possible and were not assessed. Other habitat types i.e. rearing or feeding areas, etc. were also not identified or assessed for any fish species.

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