

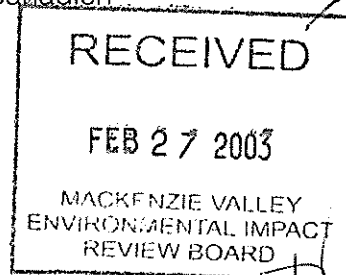
Minister of Indian Affairs
and Northern Development



Ministre des Affaires
indiennes et du Nord canadien

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H4

FEB 21 2003



Chief Archie Catholique
Lutsel K'e/Kache Dene First Nation
Lutsel K'e Dene Band
PO Box 28
LUTSEL K'E NT X0E 1A0

Dear Chief Catholique:

Thank you for your letter of January 24, 2003, in which you request my assistance to ensure that the Lutsel K'e/Kache Dene First Nation (LKDFN) can meaningfully participate in the environmental assessment of the proposed Snap Lake Diamond Project.

During the environmental assessment process, the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (Review Board) is the primary vehicle for consultation with Aboriginal people who may be affected by the proposed development. The Review Board must ensure that the concerns of all parties, including Aboriginal people, are taken into consideration during the environmental assessment by providing adequate opportunities for participation in the process. I would encourage the LKDFN to work with the Review Board to identify a participation process that meets the LKDFN's needs. The Review Board may opt to adjust the current environmental assessment time lines to accommodate your request and to request appropriate additional funding if necessary.

I recognize that the LKDFN has some concerns with the current environmental assessment process. In order that both the Review Board and I are able to better understand these issues, I would ask that you specifically identify your concerns. I understand that the Review Board, on January 31, 2003, requested that the LKDFN clarify its community needs for greater participation in the environmental assessment process and would encourage the LKDFN to do so. Should you feel it would be useful and appropriate, officials from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's regional office in Yellowknife could attend meetings between the LKDFN and the Review Board as observers.

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Again, thank you for writing. I trust that this response is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
ORIGINAL NOTE FOR
ROBERT D. NAULT

Robert D. Nault, PC, MP

c.c.: The Honourable Steven Nitah, MLA
Mr. Gordon Wray
Mr. John McConnell