

Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board

Our File EA01-004

February 19, 2003

To all Parties to the Environmental Assessment
of the De Beers Snap Lake Diamond Project:

Re: Work Plan Amendments – De Beers Canada Mining Inc. Snap Lake Diamond Project

The Review Board has been advised of concerns related to the timing of the Environmental Assessment (EA) Process for the Snap Lake Diamond Project and of other procedural concerns.

The Review Board met in response to these concerns on Wednesday, February 19, 2003 and discussed the EA Process and the current work plan. The Review Board decided that, in order to ensure the parties an opportunity to fully consider technical information filed in the proceeding and to prepare for their hearing participation accordingly, the EA process should be amended as outlined below. These changes provide the parties more time to prepare for the hearings, now scheduled for April 28 to May 2, 2003. The overall time frame for the EA process has not been extended. The Review Board will still produce its Environmental Assessment report by the end of June 2003.

The following table outlines the revised schedule for the EA Process.

Milestone	Date
Last day for De Beers to submit Technical Memoranda	February 28, 2003
Last day for EA Parties to respond to De Beers' Technical Memoranda	March 14, 2003
Pre-hearing Conference	March 26 & 27, 2003
Circulation of Public Hearing agenda	March 29, 2003
Last day for De Beers to submit Public Hearing presentations	April 11, 2003
Last day for EA Parties to submit Public Hearing presentations	April 17, 2003
Public Hearing	April 28 to May 2, 2003
Closure of Public Registry	May 23, 2003
Proposed submission of Report of Environmental Assessment to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	June 27, 2003

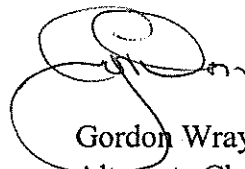
The Pre-hearing Conference will include both an identification and discussion of those outstanding technical issues, which may require further treatment at the Public Hearing, and a discussion of matters related to the conduct of the hearing. Immediately prior to the Pre-hearing Conference, the Review Board will distribute to the parties a draft synopsis prepared by staff and consultants of the outstanding technical issues, which in its view may require further consideration at the public hearing. This will provide Pre-Hearing Conference participants a framework for discussing the priority topic areas for inclusion in the Public Hearing agenda.

As stated above, while the Pre-hearing Conference and the Public Hearing have been delayed by approximately one month, the date for submission of the Report of the Environmental Assessment to the Minister is unchanged from the original date of June 27, 2003. As a result, the overall EA Process will not be delayed by these amendments.

The amended work plan permits more time for review and consideration of recent technical information submitted by De Beers and the other Parties to the EA. It also allows De Beers and the Parties to the EA more time to resolve outstanding technical issues and the Review Board encourages De Beers to continue to make best efforts to resolve any outstanding issues that directly affected parties may have.

The Review Board will provide further detail on the process and procedures associated with each of the milestones outlined in the above table by Monday February 24, 2003. Should you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Glenda Fratton at (867) 766-7053.

Yours truly,



Gordon Wray
Alternate Chair,
DeBeers Snap Lake
Environmental Assessment

