

NORTHWEST TERRITORY MÉTIS NATION

July 17, 2003

VIA FACSIMILE

Vern Christensen
Executive Director
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
YELLOWKNIFE, NT

Dear Vern,

IMA File: 03-RB-D0001**Removal of NWTMN Final Submission to Public Registry – May 22, 2003**

The Northwest Territory Métis Nation (NWTMN) takes exception to the decision made by the MVEIRB to remove our final written submission from the Public Registry. At this time the NWTMN would request that the MVEIRB provide the legal reference that was used to assist in reaching the decision regarding removal.

In addition, your letter dated July 8th makes reference to traditional land use information that was supposedly available during the course of the EA. Since this information was only presented publicly by De Beers as part of their application submission, the NWTMN contends that the information was a De Beers "internal draft document" and not as readily available as purported by yourself or De Beers. Furthermore, De Beers made no effort to advise the NWTMN as to their Fort Resolution Métis traditional knowledge collection activities. Under normal circumstances De Beers should have dealt in good faith and advised my office accordingly. Unfortunately, De Beers is aware that such information would have clearly placed their company in a position that would have ultimately forced them to discuss mitigation with the NWTMN.

Given the limited resources and extreme disadvantage of being a late participant the NWTMN views the MVEIRB decision as having total disregard towards the inherent rights of all South Slave Métis to participate in a process that directly impacts our traditional territory. The MVEIRB, being composed of northern residents, should have never allowed the EA to proceed without securing the participation of a directly affected aboriginal group whose lands will be impacted by De Beers. A brief scan of the political environment and ongoing Self Government Negotiations would have clearly illustrated the need to secure our involvement. I would be willing to venture a guess that the MVEIRB would not be so willing to proceed with an EA process in the absence of any other NWT Aboriginal government from across the territory.

It is difficult to imagine that the MVEIRB is working on behalf of all northerners when the rights and affected status of 1/8th of the territorial population is overlooked. The rush to bring the NWT's 3rd diamond mine into production is being conducted at the expense of the 5000 NWTMN beneficiaries. It saddens my office that an amicable solution could not be achieved and that the MVEIRB failed to adequately represent our interest. The approach that was taken by the NWTMN towards the MVEIRB and De Beers was, until the end, intended to cooperate in developing the north. As we approached the close of the Public Registry it became clear that our words have fallen upon deaf ears, this forced a more confrontational approach as the NWTMN felt that our concerns would not be addressed.

The MVEIRB's actions are perhaps a tribute to how historically government and its agents have advertently disregarded aboriginal rights and claims. And it is likely that as the NWTMN nears completion of our AIP and other processes we will pursue options that will entitle us to regulate land use in our traditional territory. Because it is now very clear that the existing structure, under the existing administration, can not be expected to effectively protect our lands or secure fair treatment for our people.

I trust that you will understand our stance towards the MVEIRB has taken a fundamental shift in both respect and our willingness to recognize your authority under the current EA.

Regretfully,



Jason E. Lepine
I.M.A Coordinator

c.c NWTMN Executive
All Métis Councils