


norman wells 01/09/04

January 8, 2004

Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
Box 938
Yellowknife, NT
X1A 2N7

Attn: Mr. Martin Haeefele
Environmental Assessment Officer

Dear Mr. Haeefele:

Environmental Assessment of Mackenzie Gas Project - Draft Work Plan

In response to your letter of December 19, 2003 (received in our office on December 22, 2003), the Town of Norman Wells has significant concerns with the proposed work plan and process.

Our first concern is the inadequate time provided to review your documents and prepare a response. The expectation of a response to a document of this importance which was distributed during the Christmas holiday season is unrealistic. The Council for the Town of Norman Wells first regularly scheduled meeting of the New Year follows the January 9th "due date for comments on the work plan (detailed on Appendix B).

A cursory examination of your work plan does lead us to question the need for public hearings at this time (we do note the bulk of the public hearings are scheduled to occur in March ... one of the busiest months of the year for communities located along the winter road system and/or adjacent to and affected by exploratory drilling, geo-technical work etc.). Further, the conclusion by the Board that the permit application for a barge landing and staging area at Camsell Bend is cause for Environmental Assessment of the whole Mackenzie Gas Project is subject to question. You have indicated that the Preliminary Information Package describes the Camsell Bend location as an integral part of the Mackenzie Gas Project and, therefore, the Board will conduct an EA based on the PIP. We do not believe the PIP provides sufficient project information nor specific details to allow northern communities and residents to adequately identify all potential environmental and socio-economic concerns. In our opinion, conducting public hearings prior to receipt of a formal application is premature and could result in ineffective and inadequate representation by those who might be impacted.

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The community of Norman Wells exists primarily because of the oil industry. Continued oil/gas exploration and the construction of a future gas line will ensure the continued economic prosperity of our businesses and residents. However, we respect the need for an inclusive "due process" relative to the pipeline project and we would respectfully ask the Board to reconsider its work plan and postpone public hearings until such time as a permit application has been filed and ample opportunity given to affected residents and communities to review the application and identify potential impacts.

Yours very truly,



H. Alec Simpson
Town Manager

Cc: Mr. Norman Yakeleya, Shatu MLA
See Distribution List