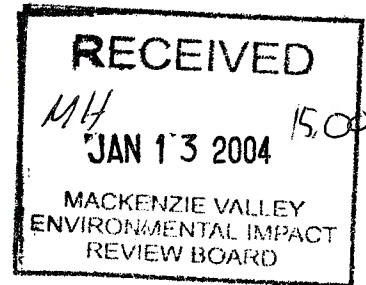


GA03-007



Vern Christensen
Executive Director
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
200 Scotia Centre
PO Box 938
Yellowknife, NT
X1A 2N7

January 13, 2004

**RE: Comments on the "Mackenzie Gas Project EA - Request for Ruling"
by the Pehdzeh Ki First Nation**

Dear Mr. Christensen

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the request by the Pehdzeh Ki First Nation to extend the review period for the "Draft Workplan for the Environmental Assessment of the Mackenzie Valley Gas Pipeline Project" dated January 8, 2004.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) supports the request by the Pehdzeh Ki First Nation. The concept of capacity to respond to regulatory processes is a common concern of northern communities. The seasonal closure of many community offices over the Christmas / New Year period is standard practice. The need for broad community consultation and endorsement by community leaders is also standard practice.

The GNWT also has had very limited opportunity to evaluate the pros and cons of the Draft Workplan due to the absence of most staff on Mandatory Leave and Statutory Leave during much of the consultation period established by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (MVEIRB).

The GNWT recognizes the significance of the Mackenzie Gas Project (MPG) to the communities of the Northwest Territories. It is important that these same communities are provided sufficient time to participate in the environmental assessment process as envisioned in the **Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (MVRMA)**. The fulfillment of the unique purpose of the MVRMA as a mechanism to protect the social, cultural and

economic well-being of northern residents can only occur if the mechanics of the process meet the capacity of the communities to participate.

The GNWT respectfully requests that the MVEIRB reconsider its timeframe for comments on the draft workplan and that an extension for comments be granted.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gavin More". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gavin More
Manager, Environmental Assessment