

Review Board releases its Report of Environmental Assessment on proposed Giant Mine Remediation Project

Yellowknife, NT. – The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (Review Board) has recommended to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) that the Giant Mine Remediation Project (the Project) proceed to the regulatory phase for approvals, subject to a suite of measures that address the significant adverse environmental impacts and public concern that would otherwise result from the proposed Project.

The Review Board's *Report of Environmental Assessment* on the proposed Giant Mine Remediation Project was released today. The report described the Board's considerations and findings regarding the proposed Project, which involves remediating the Giant Mine site, located in the City of Yellowknife. The Project includes:

- managing 237,000 tonnes of underground arsenic trioxide dust by ground freezing;
- remediating the surface, including covering the 13.5 million tonnes of contaminated tailings, managing the open pits, demolition of contaminated buildings, and management of contaminated soils, all to industrial standards for future land use
- managing site water and releasing treated water through a diffuser in Great Slave Lake

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories also proposed that the Project would be actively maintained for perpetuity, with vital components replaced periodically.

The Review Board carefully considered the evidence and submissions on the public record, including hearing presentations and written submissions from the Developer, the Yellowknives Dene, the City of Yellowknife, Alternatives North, the North Slave Metis Alliance, members of the public and others.

After careful deliberation, the Review Board concluded that the proposed Project is likely to cause significant adverse social and biophysical impacts, including cumulative impacts arising from the potential effects of the proposed Project in combination with the effects of past mining activities. It also found that these impacts would generate significant public concern.

The Report of Environmental Assessment sets out the measures prescribed by the Review Board to mitigate these impacts. These measures:

- require that the Project timeframe be reduced from perpetuity to a more manageable time frame of 100 years;
- facilitate ongoing research in emerging technologies towards finding a permanent solution; and,
- require independent reviews of the Project every 20 years to evaluate its effectiveness and decide if a better approach can be identified.

Other measures prescribed by the Review Board include:

- a comprehensive general risk assessment and detailed human health risk assessment;
- human health monitoring;
- investigation of long-term funding options;
- independent oversight;
- diversion of Baker Creek;
- improvement of water treatment to a drinking water standard;
- replacement of the proposed underwater diffuser near N'dilo with a near shore outfall immediately offshore of the Giant mine site; and
- other measures to address the significant potential impacts of this Project.

It is the Review Board's opinion that these measures will mitigate the significant impacts identified in the *Report of Environmental Assessment* and address the causes of public concern. The Board has recommended that the Project be approved subject to these measures.

Board Chairperson Richard Edjericon said, "This is a complex and unique project to deal with a challenging problem. The Review Board's measures will reduce the significant impacts of the project as proposed, and improve the project, while addressing the public concerns that the Board has heard. These measures will help ensure that people and the environment are protected, while setting the stage to find a permanent solution."

The report is being transmitted to AANDC for consideration by Responsible Ministers, as is legally required. Upon acceptance of the report by the Minister of AANDC, the Project can move on to the licensing and permitting phase of the approvals process

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About the Review Board

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board was established by the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* in 1998 as an independent administrative tribunal responsible for the environmental impact assessment process in the Mackenzie Valley, Northwest Territories. The *Act* gives aboriginal peoples of the Mackenzie Valley a greater say in resource development and management. As a co-management board, aboriginal land claim organizations nominate half of the board members, and the federal and territorial governments nominate the other half of the board members. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada appoints all of the members to the Review Board.

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