



June 2, 2014

Todd Slack  
Research and Regulatory Specialist  
Land and Environment  
Yellowknives Dene First Nation  
PO Box 2514  
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P8

Dear Mr. Slack:

**RE: Your email of May 13, 2014 concerning Crown consultation with regard to the Snap Lake Water Licence Amendment Environmental Assessment (EA1314-02)**

At the pre-hearing conference for the Snap Lake water licence amendment environmental assessment (EA1314-02), you raised important questions about the Crown's duty to consult and potentially accommodate Aboriginal governments whose Aboriginal and treaty rights may be adversely affected by a Crown decision on this environmental assessment. In particular, you sought clarification on the manner in which the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Government of Canada will address the specific concerns of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN), particularly in light of the recent changes as a result of devolution.

Notwithstanding the new authorities of the GNWT, it is important to note that it remains an objective of the environmental assessment process, conducted by the Mackenzie Environmental Impact Review Board (the Review Board) under the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*, to ensure the concerns of Aboriginal peoples are taken into account. The Review Board process is therefore an appropriate consultative forum for Aboriginal governments to raise specific concerns regarding a proposed development, so that the Review Board may consider those concerns in its recommendation to Responsible Ministers.

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When the Responsible Ministers receive and consider the Review Board's recommendation, they will also assess whether the Review Board has adequately addressed the concerns expressed by Aboriginal governments. If Aboriginal governments raise concerns falling within areas of federal jurisdiction, the GNWT will work with federal departments and agencies as required.

Further details are provided in the letter of March 25, 2014 addressed to Chief Edward Sangris and Chief Ernest Betsina, co-signed by representatives of the Northern Projects Management Office (NPMO) and the GNWT.

I invite the YKDFN to speak with representatives of the GNWT regarding any general or technical questions or concerns it may have with respect to GNWT participation in this environmental assessment. Please do not hesitate to contact me to address these concerns or to direct your inquiry appropriately. I have reviewed NPMO's May 22, 2014 letter to YKDFN and I understand that Marie Adams at NPMO can provide similar assistance with respect to the participation of federal departments.

Sincerely,



Lorraine Seale  
Manager, Project Assessment  
Land Use and Sustainability Division

c: Mark Cliffe-Phillips, Executive Director, Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board  
Marie Adams, Senior Project Manager, Northern Projects Management Office, Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency  
Matt Hoover, Regulatory Analyst, North Slave Métis Alliance  
Mike Tollis, Wildlife, Lands, and Environment Manager, Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation  
Carey Ogilvie, Head, Environmental Assessment North (NT and NU), Environment Canada  
Stuart Niven, Senior Fisheries Protection Biologist, Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
Catherine Conrad, Director, Environment and Renewable Resources, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada  
Erica Bonhomme, Manager, Environment - Snap Lake Mine, DeBeers Canada Inc.