



MiningWatch Canada

Mines Alerte

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Thursday October 30, 2008

Paul Mercredi
Environmental Assessment Officer
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
Box 938, 5102 50th Avenue
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N7

RE: Tyhee NWT Corp. EA Scoping Submission (EA0809-003)

Dear Mr. Mercredi,

On behalf of MiningWatch Canada I would like to submit the following comments for the MVEIRB's consideration in scoping of the EA for the Yellowknife Gold Project. After reviewing the project description we would recommend and anticipate that this project be submitted to an Environmental Impact Review. This recommendation is based on the scope of the project and in particular the proposed use of a natural water body as a tailings impoundment area.

MiningWatch Canada is a pan-Canadian initiative supported by environmental, social justice, Aboriginal and labour organisations from across the country. It addresses the urgent need for a co-ordinated public interest response to the threats to public health, water and air quality, fish and wildlife habitat and community interests posed by irresponsible mineral policies and practices in Canada and around the world. One of our priorities in recent years has been to monitor, analyse and comment on issues associated with the Metal Mining Effluent Regulations (MMER), in particular Schedule 2.

Given our ongoing involvement with the MMER and Schedule 2, it is Tyhee's proposed use of Winter Lake for its TIA that is of most interest and concern to MiningWatch. However, we also have concerns related to the implications of climate change, the report's precipitation model, the potential for metal contamination of surface and groundwater, the need for closure and rehabilitation plans, cumulative effects, and the project's overall contribution to the sustainability of the communities and ecosystems in the region. Please find below more specific points on each of these topics.

Winter Lake and Tailings Management

- The importance of Winter Lake as fish habitat should be further assessed and clarified.
- The other natural values which stand to be lost if Winter Lake is used as a TIA need to be documented and evaluated.
- A proper consideration of viable alternatives needs to be done. The assessment should consider a full range of values, costs and impacts associated with each alternative, including natural capital values of each site.
- Selecting two alternative sites that are not viable due to their inadequate size, as was done in the project description, does not constitute adequate consideration of alternatives. Viable alternatives should be identified and evaluated.

Climate Change

- Potential impacts of climate change on the project have not been considered.
- The project description provides indication of increased precipitation in recent years but this increase, or the potential for more extreme precipitation events, has not been addressed.
- The impacts of climate change on the permafrost of the area and any potential impacts on the project need to be assessed.

Precipitation Model

- The precipitation model and subsequent water balance uses a 10-year maximum as its extreme event. This, despite the fact that in each of 2005, 2006 and 2007, precipitation was over or within 80% of the calculated 10-year high.
- A more robust precipitation model including 100-year extreme events (rainfall and snowfall) and consideration of climate change should be included in the EA.

Metal Contamination

- Despite the fact that mine waste from the old Discovery Mine has presumably resulted in high levels of aluminium, arsenic, cadmium and copper in Round Lake, the project description downplays any potential risk of metal leaching from waste rock or tailings.
- A more comprehensive assessment of metal leaching potential and potential treatment options for TIA effluent need to be undertaken.

Closure and Rehabilitation

- The EA should include a full closure and rehabilitation plan with estimated costs, and any lasting liabilities requiring ongoing care and maintenance need to be identified.

Cumulative Effects

- In the project report there is no consideration of cumulative effects.
- Cumulative effects on the ecological and social values will need to be addressed.

Sustainability

- The current project description does not adequately assess the long-term implications for the sustainability of the region's ecosystems and communities.
- Sustainability criteria should be identified and the project assessed against these criteria as part of the EA process.
- We recommend the following sustainability criteria be applied to the proposal for both current and future generations:
 - Equitable distribution of costs and benefits,
 - Maintenance or enhancement of ecological integrity,
 - Lasting social benefits including economic and cultural improvements.

In addition to the above recommendations it is important that intervener funding be provided to affected First Nations and stakeholders who have an interest in the project. This will help to ensure effective participation in the EA and EIR processes.

I would be happy to discuss these recommendations should you require any clarification or additional information.

Regards,



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