

NORTH SLAVE MÉTIS ALLIANCE

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March 3, 2009

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Re: Draft Terms of Reference and Workplan for the Environmental Assessment of Tyhee NWT Corp's Yellowknife Gold Project. (EA0809-003).

The North Slave Métis Alliance has reviewed the above noted documents and offers the following comments:

Terms of Reference:

- We would appreciate seeing specific reference in the TOR to the contested property rights in the area, including the fact that settled aboriginal claimants receive royalty and tax payments while unsettled aboriginal claimants do not. The issue of future compensation payments that the Crown may have to pay for the removal of non-renewable resources should be one of the key socio-economic and cultural lines of inquiry.
- The definition of "heritage resources" provided on page 32 of the TOR is not adequate. According to the MVRMA (Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act) Heritage resources are defined as " archaeological or historic sites, burial sites, artifacts and other objects of historical, cultural or religious significance, and historical or cultural records". The use of the term "sacred places" seems unduly narrow, and undefined. Historic sites, objects of historical and cultural significance, and historical and cultural records are not normally considered "sacred" by all cultural groups, so this should be clarified. The MVRMA requires a board to seek and consider the advice of any affected First Nation respecting the presence of heritage resources that might be affected – not just archaeological artifacts and sacred sites. Impact on the environment is defined as any impact on heritage resources, not just archaeological artifacts and sacred sites.
- The assessment of impacts to heritage resources should include Consultation with each potentially affected First Nation (by the way, the MVRMA includes Métis organizations in the definition of "First Nations"), not just individual TK holders, researchers, or the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Center.

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- The assessment of impacts to socio-economic, cultural and heritage environment, including the issue of equitable distribution of impacts (positive and negative), on each First Nation specifically, should be a primary line of inquiry, rather than a subject of note.

Workplan:

- We would appreciate an information workshop or training session on the reclassification of water bodies to tailings ponds. We are not familiar with this process, its rationale or methods.
- One month is not enough time for a busy and underfunded First Nation such as the North Slave Métis Alliance to review the Developers Assessment Report and prepare Information Requests. Staff must review the document and discuss it with the community. The NSMA has only two staff in the environment department, and may need expert assistance to properly prepare information request. An appropriate expert may need to be located and hired. At least twice as much time is required (60 days).
- Technical reports would need an additional 60 days for preparation after responses are received to information requests.
- The NSMA needs a month advance notice to plan and schedule meaningful participation in meetings such as the pre-hearing conference and the Public Hearing.

Overall, the NSMA is impressed by the high quality of work done by the MVEIRB, and looks forward to participating in the assessment of this project. Thank you for the opportunity.

Sincerely,



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