

March 12, 2024

Note to File

RE: Mackenzie Valley Highway, meeting with Environment and Climate Change Canada

On February 22, 2024, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) met with Mackenzie Valley Review Board (Review Board) staff to discuss process steps and the role of ECCC in the environmental assessment of the Mackenzie Valley Highway project.

Participants

ECCC: Eva Walker, Myra Robertson, Marie Fast, Melissa Pinto

Review Board staff: Catherine Fairbairn, Simon Toogood, Chuck Hubert

Overview of discussion

Review Board staff answered questions from ECCC on upcoming environmental assessment process steps including information requests, technical sessions, and other steps in the [Workplan](#).

ECCC described its mandates including responsibilities for migratory birds, climate change, and species at risk, and how it could provide its expertise on those subjects during the environmental assessment. ECCC advised that it had met with Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) to discuss its role in providing advice to the Review Board on impacts to boreal caribou. Board staff confirmed that GNWT and ECCC could submit a [meeting report](#) to the Review Board summarizing these discussions. The meeting report would be posted to the public registry to benefit all parties.

Review Board staff advised that it had hired a [technical expert](#) to assist the Review Board with analyzing impacts from the project on ungulates. Review Board staff confirmed that the technical expert is an internal advisor to the Review Board.

ECCC recommended that the Review Board update its s. 79 *Species at Risk Act* [notification letter](#) due to changes in species listed as at risk or as a conservation concern, and changes in the project description since the environmental assessment began.

Review Board staff and ECCC discussed arranging a future meeting with ECCC climate change experts to discuss how they could participate in this environmental assessment.

The contact for the Mackenzie Valley Highway project is Senior Environmental Assessment Advisor Catherine Fairbairn (867-766-7054, cfairbairn@reviewboard.ca).