



NIRB File No.: 07LN014

AANDC File No.: N2012N0018

Previous AANDC File No.: N2003J0001

NWB File No.: 3BC-MAR1014

NRI File No.: 0200803N-M

November 5, 2012

The Honourable John Duncan
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
c/o Jeff Mercer, Manager Land Administration
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
P.O. Box 100
Iqaluit, NU X0B 0C0

Via email: jeff.mercer@aandc.gc.ca and landsmining@aandc.gc.ca

Re: Application Exempt from the Requirement for Screening pursuant to Section 12.4.3 of the NLCA: Mars Society's "Devon Island Research Facility" project, Qikiqtani Region

Dear Jeff Mercer:

On July 12, 2012 the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) received a positive conformity determination (North Baffin Regional Land Use Plan) from the Nunavut Planning Commission for Mars Society's "Devon Island Research Facility" project proposal. On October 29, 2012 the NIRB received an application from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) for a new Land Use Permit (No. N2012N0018) and commenced its assessment of the proposal.

Please be advised that the original project proposal (NIRB File No.: 07LN014) was received by the NIRB from INAC (now AANDC) on February 20, 2007 and was screened in accordance with Part 4, Article 12 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA). On April 3, 2007 the NIRB issued a 12.4.4 (a) screening decision to the Minister of INAC (now Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development) indicating that the proposed project could proceed subject to the NIRB's recommended terms and conditions.

On June 23, 2010 the NIRB received an application for an extension request from AANDC to the Land Use Permit (No. N2003J0001) for the above mentioned project. After a thorough assessment of the extension request, the NIRB determined that the application was exempt from the requirement for further screening pursuant to Section 12.4.3 of the NLCA, and reissued the enclosed screening decision report on July 5, 2010.

The current AANDC application, the original NIRB Screening Decision Report (File No. 07LN014) and related file information are available from the NIRB's ftp site at the following link:

<http://ftp.nirb.ca/01-SCREENINGS/COMPLETED%20SCREENINGS/2007/07LN014-Robert%20Zubrin/>.

PREVIOUSLY-SCREENED PROJECT PROPOSAL:

As previously screened by the NIRB (File No. 07LN014), the Mars Society's "Devon Island Research Facility" project was located on Devon Island within the Qikiqtani region, approximately 168 kilometres (km) northeast of Resolute. The proposed research facility and related activities were to be located at the Haughton impact crater site on Devon Island, within the general vicinity of a separate research camp operated by the Mars Institute. The Proponent had originally identified three main goals of the project:

1. To provide a testbed for studying the many aspects of field exploration operations on a human mission to Mars;
2. To provide a capable field research laboratory to help further our understanding of the Arctic, the Earth, Mars and the possibilities and limits of life on our planet and beyond; and,
3. To inform and inspire people around the world to greater interest in space and science by bringing before them in a tangible form the vision of human exploration of Mars.

The activities/components associated with this proposal included:

- Simulate landed spacecraft on Mars;
- Six or seven person crew living and working in a habitat/laboratory module;
- Solid wastes incinerated and ash flown to Resolute for disposal;
- On-site disposal of grey water;
- On-site storage of five (5) drums of gasoline and 5 drums of diesel fuel; and
- All-terrain vehicles and generators to be used.

The 2010 application included only an extension of permits and introduced no new activities or components.

CURRENT APPLICATION:

The Mars Society is proposing to continue with the same project activities as originally screened, and requires a new Land Use Permit to replace the previously issued now-expiring permit.

Please note that Section 12.4.3 of the NLCA states that:

"Any application for a component or activity of a project proposal that has been permitted to proceed in accordance with these provisions shall be exempt from the requirement for screening by NIRB unless:

(a) such component or activity was not part of the original project proposal; or

(b) its inclusion would significantly modify the project.”

After completing a review of the information provided in support of the current application, the NIRB is of the understanding that the application for a new Land Use Permit to replace the previously issued permit does not change the general scope of the original project activities, and the exceptions noted in NLCA 12.4.3(a) and (b) do not apply. Therefore, this application is exempt from the requirement for screening pursuant to Section 12.4.3 of the NLCA and the activities therein remain subject to the terms and conditions recommended in the original April 3, 2007 Screening Decision Report (enclosed).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Kelli Gillard, Technical Advisor, at (867) 983-4619 or kgillard@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan Barry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ryan Barry
Executive Director
Nunavut Impact Review Board

cc: Robert Zurbrin, Mars Society
Phyllis Beaulieu, Nunavut Water Board
Bernie MacIsaac, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Mosha Cote, Nunavut Research Institute
Tracey McCaie, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

Enclosed: NIRB Screening Decision Report, File No.: 07LN014 (April 3, 2007)