



We know the North. We know logistics. We come with the territory.

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July 21, 2011

The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq
460 Confederation Building
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

The Honourable John Duncan
Room 310 Justice Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Re: Meliadine Road Permitting

Honourable Ministers:

Over the past year I have been following with keen interest the developments surrounding the Meliadine project, and in particular, the proposed all weather access road. Living in Baker Lake, I have seen firsthand the positive impact that a large scale mining project can have on a community such as ours. I have seen people trained and get new jobs, and better their own lives, and the lives of their families. I have also seen people proud, in a way I have not seen in a long time. Proud because they can support their families and proud because they are doing work they enjoy and no longer have to rely on government support. I have seen in the Meadowbank mine lots of hope for Nunavut's future, and for the future of our young people.

I keep reminding myself how lucky I am to be living in Baker Lake where such an important project is taking place, but I do worry when I see what is happening in Rankin Inlet, and when I hear all the talk about the delays to the construction of the all-weather road. I worry because I know that the Meadowbank Mine will be around until I retire, but I wonder what job opportunities will my children have?

Just yesterday, on CBC, I read that Nunavut's unemployment dropped by 2.6% in the last year. I am certain this drop has a lot to do with the developments of mines like Meadowbank. But I also read that the unemployment rate is still 16.6%, more than twice the rate in the rest of Canada. The reason for this high unemployment rate is because our young people lack the training to participate in Nunavut's new developments. A construction project like the Meliadine access road would give many young people an opportunity to develop skills so they can participate in the mining industry as it grows, but if we sit back, I wonder what opportunities my children will have? Will they live in a Nunavut with an unemployment rate of 20%?

We all know the transportation challenges of living and working in the north. A month delay to the approval of a project could result a delay of a year or more, as the short window to transport materials closes. We have to ask ourselves whether we, as a territory, can afford such a delay, since this not only delays the project, but delays when our young people will have opportunities for training and jobs. We also have to ask ourselves whether Nunavut wants to send this kind of message to the rest of the resource industry. I urge you to please help Nunavut streamline the approval of the Meliadine all-weather access road.

This delay could cause a domino effect that would delay this project significantly and would discourage other mining companies from looking at Nunavut as a good place to do business. We need to make a commitment to open up Nunavut so that companies can more readily access projects. We need to help them help us develop our economy instead of slowing down a process that could benefit the whole territory.

Our land claims were settled so we could participate in the resource development that could take place in Nunavut. The private sector, and specifically, the mining industry, has made a significant improvement to the lives of Nunavummiut. We are finally starting to enjoy the benefits the mining industry has brought us.

We should be supporting the industry, and doing what we can to help open Nunavut's next mine, so that we can have more people trained and more people employed. I find it frustrating that we seem to be doing the opposite, and putting up hurdles for companies like Agnico Eagle, and as a direct consequence, putting up hurdles to Nunavummiut bettering their lives.

The Meliadine project has received wide-spread support from all level of government and throughout the business community, so we need to work together to move the road development forward so that we do not see what could potentially be a lengthy delay in the project. I look to the west and wonder whether what happened with the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline. They missed their opportunity, and are still waiting, a generation later. I don't want us to miss ours, and I don't want my children to wonder what kind of future they can have in Nunavut. I urge you to do what you can to streamline the permitting process to allow for the development of this road.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Tapatai". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Peter Tapatai, President, PEL

cc: Nunavut Impact Review Board, Denis Gourde, Agnico Eagle Mines