



Affaires autochtones et
Développement du Nord Canada

Aboriginal Affairs and
Northern Development Canada

Sous-ministre adjoint

Assistant Deputy Minister

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0H4



JUL 14 2017

Ms. Elizabeth Copland
Chairperson
Nunavut Impact Review Board
PO Box 1360
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Via e-mail: ecopland@nirb.ca; info@nirb.ca; rbarry@nirb.ca

Dear Ms. Copland,

Thank you for your Screening Decision Report of April 18, 2017, addressed to the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, regarding Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd.'s "Pilot study – Hovercraft Implementation in Nunavut" project proposal, NIRB File Number 11EN010. The report indicates that the Nunavut Impact Review Board (the Board) has determined that the project proposal as currently designed is likely to cause significant public concern and is likely to result in significant adverse environmental and socio-economic impacts, and has recommended that the project proposal be modified or abandoned, pursuant to section 91 of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*.

Of primary importance to the Board in making its screening determination were a) the lack of clarity around the impacts of hovercraft technology in the Nunavut Settlement Area, and consequentially the challenges in determining whether or not the project is likely to cause significant adverse impacts and whether any impacts can be successfully mitigated, b) the potential for unacceptable impacts on wildlife habitat or Inuit harvesting activities, and c) significant public concern. The Board also noted while the above criteria could be sufficient justification to refer the project to review, the lack of studies and baseline information to inform such a review would mean that more in-depth assessment is not likely address the uncertainties.

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Under section 95 of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*, Minister Bennett has three decision options to consider after consultation with the Board: return the proposal to the proponent for modification and resubmission to the Board; refer the Project proposal for a review under section 94(1)(a)(i), (ii), (iii), (iv), or inform the proponent that the Project should be abandoned.

After considering the Board's report and the record for the consultation meeting held between staff of both Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and the Board on June 9, 2017, I have decided, on the Minister's behalf and pursuant to section 95(a)(1), that the proposed Project should be returned to the proponent for modification and resubmission to the Nunavut Planning Commission.

Should Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd. choose to resubmit a modified proposal, I encourage them to carefully review the Board's Screening Decision Report, especially considering the Board's recommendations that the proponent conduct an approved research study in consultation with interested parties on the potential effects of the usage of hovercraft, conducts community consultation sessions with concerned parties, works with the Kivalliq Inuit Association to resolve concerns, and develop its Amaruq Wildlife Protection and Response plan to reflect the potential impacts associated with hovercraft use.

Once again, I would like to thank the Board for its efforts in screening the Project.

Respectfully,



Stephen M. Van Dine
Northern Affairs Organization