



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Nunavut Impact Review Board Issues Reconsideration Report and Recommendations for Agnico Eagle Mines Limited's "Meliadine Extension" Project Proposal, related to the Meliadine Gold Mine Project**

CAMBRIDGE BAY, NU – November 17, 2023 – The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) has issued a Reconsideration Report and Recommendations to present the findings of the Board's assessment of Agnico Eagle Mines Limited's (Agnico Eagle) "Meliadine Extension" Project Proposal (Extension Proposal). As set out in detail within the Board's Report, the NIRB's conclusions and recommendations came from careful consideration of all the technical issues, concerns, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, Indigenous Knowledge, and information provided to the Board throughout the assessment. Due to the considerable uncertainty of the potential for the Proposal to have negative, lasting effects on caribou, and the uncertainty of cumulative effects, **the Board is recommending that the Extension Proposal should not be allowed to proceed at this time.**

The Board's assessment of the Extension Proposal commenced in April 2022. Since the Proposal was received, the Board has conducted community information tours in the potentially affected Kivalliq, Northern Manitoba and Northern Saskatchewan communities, has hosted an in-person Technical Meeting, Community Roundtable and Pre-Hearing Conference in Rankin Inlet in November 2022, conducted a second Pre-Hearing Conference in March 2023, ending with an 8-day in-person Public Hearing in Rankin Inlet on September 12-20, 2023 consisting of technical sessions and a final Community Roundtable.

In the Extension Proposal, Agnico Eagle proposed to extend the use of current components of the Project, add new components, and extend the operations phase of the mine (i.e. mine life) by 11 years to 2043. Some key activities of the Extension Proposal include:

- Ongoing use of existing infrastructure at the mine, the All-weather Access Road (AWAR), bypass road, and Itivia Harbour;
- Extend open pit access for specific targets to underground mining access and develop additional infrastructure and portals to support the additional underground access;
- Construct a windfarm including 11 wind turbines, with associated infrastructure and access road;
- Include an option to store waste rock, tailings and saline effluent in exhausted pits; and
- Increase employment and camp infrastructure to accommodate additional personnel.

Throughout the assessment the Board heard the shared concern expressed by Intervenor and potentially affected Kivalliq, Northern Manitoba and Northern Saskatchewan communities that uncertainty remains regarding the nature and extent of potential negative impacts on caribou health, abundance and behaviour due to the intensification of mining, 11-year extension of the mine life and construction and operation of the windfarm as proposed in the Extension Proposal. The Board also heard from Intervenor, community representatives and members of the public that there was concern about the potential for the Extension Proposal to have cumulative effects to freshwater quality, air quality, and the marine environment.

With respect to the windfarm specifically, the Board heard that although community members and Intervenor were generally supportive of Agnico Eagle finding alternative energy sources, they opposed the proposed location of the windfarm. Parties indicated to the Board that their opposition to the specific site of the windfarm was based on considerable uncertainty about the potential effect on caribou.

While the Board recognizes the support in the Kivalliq communities for the economic benefits that the Extension Proposal represents, the Board has identified that there is considerable uncertainty in relation to the scale and scope of effects (including cumulative effects) the proposed intensification of activities, addition of 11 years to the mine life, and windfarm in the location assessed, will have on:

- the movement, abundance and health of the Qamanirjuaq caribou herd;
- air quality;
- water quality in Meliadine Lake and Itivia Harbour; and
- health, livelihood, culture and traditional land use of people in the region, that would be linked to these potential negative ecosystemic effects.

In addition, the Board noted high levels of uncertainty as to whether existing or modified mitigation measures would be sufficiently protective to prevent or manage negative effects from the Extension Proposal on caribou; especially when considering critical calving and post-calving periods. The Board also acknowledges that unpredicted negative impacts on caribou would have immediate negative effects on the ability of Inuit, Dene and Denesuline reliant on this herd to harvest caribou, which could have devastating and lasting effects on livelihood, health and culture.

With respect to the windfarm, the Board is generally supportive of Proponent finding ways to transition to alternative energy sources, reduce their reliance on hydrocarbons and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The Board's conclusions in this case are limited to a finding that the Board is not confident that the potential negative effects on caribou due to the windfarm as proposed and assessed in the Extension Proposal, can be effectively prevented, mitigated or adaptively managed.

The Board also notes that in future, with additional project and regional monitoring efforts, there may be increased certainty regarding effects predictions and mitigation measures applicable to the potential effects on caribou and cumulative effects that could provide an increased level of assurance that some or all of the activities, works and undertakings proposed in the Extension

Proposal could be conducted in a manner that would not unduly and adversely impact the ecosystemic integrity of the Nunavut Settlement Area.

The Board is grateful to all who actively participated in the assessment of the Extension Proposal and who generously shared their knowledge, experience and expertise with the Board. The NIRB recognizes and appreciates the sacrifices all parties made to attend the Board's in-person meetings, and thanks everyone for their willingness to meet and work together in a collaborative, and respectful manner during the assessment process.

The Reconsideration Report and Recommendations includes a plain-language Highlights Document which provides an overview of the Board's decision for all audiences. The Reconsideration Report, Highlights Document, and all material related to the Extension Proposal are available from the NIRB's online Public Registry at [www.nirb.ca/project/125684](http://www.nirb.ca/project/125684).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "M. Kaviq Kaluraq". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "M." and last name "Kaluraq" clearly visible.

Kaviq Kaluraq  
Chairperson  
Nunavut Impact Review Board

**For more information, the media may contact:** Ryan Barry, *Interim* Executive Director  
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