



NEWS RELEASE

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Nunavut Impact Review Board Issues Reconsideration Report and Recommendations for B2Gold's "Back River Energy Centre" Project Proposal, a proposed modification to the approved Back River Gold Mine Project

CAMBRIDGE BAY, NU – April 12, 2024 – The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) has issued a Reconsideration Report and Recommendations (the Report) to present the findings of the Board's assessment of B2Gold Back River Corp.'s (B2Gold, formerly Sabina Gold & Silver Corp.) "Back River Project Energy Centre" Project Proposal (the Energy Centre Proposal or Proposal), a proposed modification to the approved Back River Gold Mine Project (the Project). As set out in detail within the Board's Report, the NIRB's conclusions and recommendations came from careful consideration of the technical issues, concerns, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, Indigenous Knowledge, and information provided to the Board throughout the assessment.

On this basis, the Board concluded that because the Energy Centre infrastructure (wind turbine generators, battery storage system, and solar panel array) is 400 kilometres (249 miles) southwest of Cambridge Bay and avoids known:

- caribou and bird migration routes;
- areas commonly used by harvesters; and
- caribou calving or post-calving grounds.

The potential for the Proposal to have negative effects on people and terrestrial wildlife such as caribou, birds, etc. are limited. Consequently, the Board views the Proposal as well-suited to provide a test case of how alternative energy sources can be developed and used in an arctic environment. During the assessment the Board also noted that there were few unresolved technical issues and widespread community support for the environmental and socio-economic benefits that could result from the Project transitioning from a reliance on diesel generators to power the Project to alternative energy by way of wind and solar power. This support was conditional on the protection of terrestrial wildlife including caribou, birds, moose, musk ox, grizzlies, etc. As a result, **the Board is recommending that the Energy Centre Proposal should be allowed to proceed, subject to specific revisions to Project Certificate No. 007, to enhance various aspects of Project monitoring, mitigation, and adaptive management planning.**

The Board's assessment of the Energy Centre Proposal commenced in October 2022. Since the Proposal was received, the Board has conducted Community Information tours in the potentially affected Kitikmeot communities, has hosted an in-person Technical Meeting, Community Roundtable, and Pre-Hearing Conference in Cambridge Bay in October 2023 (which included participation from Kitikmeot and Athabasca Denesųliné communities from Northern Saskatchewan), and an in-person Public Hearing in Cambridge Bay on February 27-29, 2024 consisting of technical sessions and a final Community Roundtable.

In the Energy Centre Proposal, B2Gold proposed to add the following alternative energy infrastructure at the Back River Gold Mine:

- 13 Wind Turbine Generators (each rated to 4-4.5 Megawatts and approximately 180 metres (590 feet) high and spaced 500 metres (1,640 feet) apart) and associated access roads and electrical transmission lines; and
- Construct a 400 metre x 400 metre (1,312 feet x 1,312 feet) pad near the existing Diesel Power Plant to include a Battery Energy Storage System in ten (10) 40-foot seacans or equivalent buildings and a solar panel array (200 metres by 400 metres (656 feet x 1,312 feet)).

During the assessment, the Board heard from Intervenors that there were very few unresolved technical issues associated with the Proposal. The Board also heard from Community Representatives and members of the public that there was considerable support for the Proposal due the potential positive impacts of reducing the Project's greenhouse gas emissions by 50%, reduced consumption and transportation of fuel, which would eliminate approximately 350 round trips per year from the Marine Laydown Area to Goose Mine on the Winter Ice Road and reduce costs, reduced air and noise emissions resulting from less use of the diesel generators, and providing potential opportunities for training and capacity building associated with the construction and operation of alternative energy technologies.

However, the Board heard this support was conditional on the Proposal being carried out in a manner that would prevent the wind turbines, solar panel arrays, Battery Energy Storage System, transmission lines, and service roads from having negative effects on the movement, behaviour, and abundance of caribou, birds, musk ox, moose, bears, and other terrestrial wildlife in the area. Intervenors and local communities also wanted to ensure that Inuit employees who are currently driving fuel trucks on the Winter Ice Road have the opportunity to transition to other jobs with the Project when the Project transitions to alternative energy sources and fuel transportation is significantly reduced.

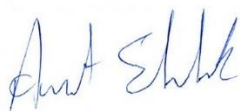
Reflecting the information and knowledge shared with the Board about the Proposal, and the conditional support for the Energy Centre Proposal, the Board has, for the reasons detailed in the Report, concluded that the Energy Centre Proposal can proceed in a manner that delivers positive environmental and socio-economic effects and minimizes the potential for negative environmental and socio-economic effects provided the Proposal is carried out in accordance with the existing and revised terms and conditions of Project Certificate No. 007. Specifically, the

Board recommends to the Responsible Minister(s) that the Energy Centre Proposal should be allowed to proceed at this time, and recommends:

- An update to NIRB Project Certificate No. 007 to reflect the transfer of ownership of the approved Back River Project from Sabina Gold and Silver Corp. to B2Gold Back River Corp.;
- revisions to 11 Terms and Conditions of NIRB Project Certificate No. 007 (#9 and #10 Noise and Vibration; #12 Permafrost; #34 Vegetation; #39, #41, and #51 Caribou; #37, #45, and #50 Terrestrial Wildlife; and #53 Birds and Bird Habitat) as discussed in Section 8.0;
- the addition of two (2) new ecosystemic Terms and Conditions to NIRB Project Certificate No. 007 in relation to Migratory Birds and Traditional Land Use – Harvesting, and one (1) socio-economic Term and Condition (Inuit and Local Employment/Contracting); and
- additions to the monitoring and reporting programs applicable to the modified Back River Gold Project as outlined in Sections 8.1 and 8.3.

The Board would like to thank all participants who shared their knowledge, experience, and perspectives with the Board and contributing to a thorough and timely assessment of the Energy Centre Proposal. 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 Back River Project Energy Centre Proposal are available online from the NIRB's Public Registry at <https://www.nirb.ca/project/125740>.

Sincerely,



Albert Ehloak
Vice-Chairperson
Nunavut Impact Review Board

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