

From: Ministre des Affaires du Nord, ministre responsable de Développement économique Canada pour les Prairies et ministre responsable de l'Agence canadienne de développement économique du Nord / Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Ec <ministrean-ministerna@rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca>

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Subject: [EXTERNAL] Correspondence from the Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister Responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister Responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency

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Ministre des Affaires du Nord, ministre responsable de
Développement économique Canada pour les Prairies et
ministre responsable de l'Agence canadienne de
développement économique du Nord



Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H4

Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister Responsible for
Prairies Economic Development Canada and
Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern
Economic Development Agency

July 8th, 2024

Albert Ehaloak
Vice-Chairperson
Nunavut Impact Review Board
P.O. Box 1360
CAMBRIDGE BAY NU X0B 0C0

Dear Albert Ehaloak:

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the Nunavut Impact Review Board's (the Board) Reconsideration Report and Recommendations (the Report) for B2Gold Back River Corp.'s (B2Gold Nunavut) Back River Project Energy Centre proposal (the Proposal).

The Ministers of Environment and Climate Change; Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard; Energy and Natural Resources; Transport; and I have the regulatory jurisdiction to make a decision with respect to the Board's Report. As the responsible Ministers, we are required to accept, reject, or vary the recommendations contained in the Board's Report. This role is established in section 12.8.3 of the

Nunavut Agreement and set out under subsection 112(6) of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act* (the Act).

As described in the Report, the Board has assessed the Proposal by way of a reconsideration of the terms and conditions of Project Certificate No. 007, conducted under section 112 of the Act. The Board has recommended that the Proposal should be allowed to proceed subject to: an update to Project Certificate No. 007 to reflect the transfer of ownership of the approved Back River Gold Mine Project from Sabina Gold and Silver Corporation to B2Gold Nunavut; revisions to 11 terms and conditions; the addition of two new ecosystemic and one socio-economic terms and conditions; and, additions to the monitoring and reporting programs applicable to the modified Back River Gold Mine Project.

After careful consideration and review of the Report, the other responsible ministers and I have decided to accept the Board's recommendation that the Proposal should be allowed to proceed and, pursuant to paragraph 112(6)(a) of the Act. We also accept each of the Board's recommended new and revised terms and conditions of Project Certificate No. 007. In coming to this decision, we have considered the Board's conclusions that the Proposal has the potential to have significant positive ecosystemic and socio-economic impacts, and that the potential for significant adverse ecosystemic and socio-economic effects associated with the Proposal can be adequately prevented, mitigated, or adaptively managed through the Board's recommended additions and revisions to the terms and conditions of Project Certificate No. 007.

Based on interventions made during the assessment and through Crown consultation undertaken with Athabasca Denesųliné Né Né Land Corporation, we encourage B2Gold Nunavut and the Kitikmeot Inuit Association to explore mechanisms for regular information exchange between the Caribou Technical Advisory Group and harvesters and potentially affected communities. We also encourage B2Gold Nunavut and the Kitikmeot Inuit Association to meaningfully consider and incorporate into decision-making the knowledge, experience, and advice in relation to caribou and terrestrial wildlife monitoring, mitigation, and management provided by harvesters and potentially affected communities.

Additionally, the Government of Canada wishes to reiterate that it acknowledges the section 35 rights of the Athabasca Denesųliné in Nunavut. The Government of Canada's expectation is that the Board, proponents and other relevant parties appropriately consider opportunities for Athabasca Denesųliné involvement in pertinent project processes.

The responsible Ministers have relied on the Report and the outcomes of consultation with the Designated Inuit Organizations and other potentially adversely impacted Indigenous groups to help inform this decision, and are satisfied that the Crown has fulfilled its section 35 duty to consult.

On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of the Board and its staff for effectively completing the assessment of the Proposal.

Sincerely,



Hon. Dan Vandal, P.C., M.P.

c.c.: The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, P.C., M.P.

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