



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **The Nunavut Impact Review Board Issues the Reconsideration Report and Recommendations for Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation's "Sustaining Operations Proposal" for the Mary River Project**

CAMBRIDGE BAY, NU – The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) has publicly released its Reconsideration Report and Recommendations (Report) that details the Board's assessment of the potential environmental and socio-economic effects of Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation's (Baffinland) "Sustaining Operations Proposal" (the Proposal). The Report presents the Board's findings and associated recommendations and has been sent to the Minister of Northern Affairs for his consideration.

The Proposal was filed with the Board on March 16, 2023 and included a request to modify the limit on trucking iron along the existing Tote Road to Milne Port from the current maximum of 4.2 Million tonnes per year (Mtpa) to six (6) Mtpa until December 31, 2024. A modification to the shipping limit of 4.2 Mtpa through Milne Inlet was also requested to allow Baffinland to ship up to 6.0 Mtpa plus an additional 0.9 Mtpa if excess ore is stranded on the ore pad due to adverse shipping conditions in a previous year; this could allow for a maximum of up to 6.9 Mtpa shipped in each of the 2023 and 2024 shipping seasons, using no more than 84 ore carriers each year.

Based on the Board's assessment of the Proposal, which included a written technical review process supplemented by two in-person Community Roundtable sessions (held in Iqaluit on July 27-29 and Pond Inlet on August 1-2), the Board has concluded that if Baffinland carries out the Proposal in compliance with the existing and revised terms and conditions of Project Certificate No. 005 and Baffinland's commitments to improve mitigation and monitoring of potential effects **the potential for significant negative environmental and socio-economic effects associated with the Proposal can be effectively managed**. Consequently, the Board recommended to the Responsible Ministers that the Proposal should be allowed to proceed to the regulatory phase subject to the Board's recommendations as outlined in the Report.

Through the assessment, the Board heard there is considerable support for the Proposal amongst a variety of parties, including several Hamlet Councils, businesses and employees in the Region,

due to the level of employment and economic benefits associated with the continuation of operations at the 6 Mtpa level of production. These parties also expressed concern about the immediate and negative effects of potential layoffs and loss of economic benefits if the Proposal was not approved and the Project was restricted to the current 4.2 Mtpa transportation and shipping limits.

However, support for the Proposal was not unanimous, and the Board heard that concerns remain about whether the Mary River Project is having negative effects on narwhal and seal populations in the area due to marine shipping. Harvesters emphasized to the Board the importance of narwhal harvesting to Inuit, their health and well-being and cultural survival. However, the Board heard there are data gaps, uncertainty and differing opinions about whether project shipping is causing a decline in the abundance, distribution and/or health of narwhal and seals in the area, and several parties urged the Board to adopt a precautionary approach to reducing the potential for the Proposal to result in negative effects on marine mammals.

In Pond Inlet the Board also heard that some community members have reduced/changed their use of the land and freshwater near the Mine, the Tote Road and Milne Port due to the spread of dust from the Project. Some residents of Pond Inlet also expressed frustration that some types of economic benefits are inaccessible to community members, noting there are constraints limiting the flow of benefits directly to the community.

The Board also heard that the assessment of repeated short-term modification proposals to the Mary River Project is creating challenges for all parties in the regulatory process, as it is difficult to assess and monitor the effects of the previous modifications when new applications for modifications to the Project are being received on an annual/expedited basis.

As detailed in Section 5 of the Report, to address these on-going concerns and uncertainty about project effects, the Board recommended changes to 11 specific terms and conditions in the Project Certificate to improve the prevention, management and monitoring of project effects. In addition, Baffinland, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and the Government of Canada proposed several new commitments to reduce the potential for negative effects and to improve project monitoring. These commitments will be added to the Project Certificate and their implementation will be monitored and reported back to the NIRB. On this basis, the Board recommended that if the Proposal complies with the existing and revised terms and conditions of Project Certificate No. 005, including commitments, the Sustaining Operations Proposal can be carried out in a manner that limits the potential for negative effects on the environment and that provides significant economic benefits to the Region.

The Board thanks everyone who participated in the NIRB's consideration of the Sustaining Operations Proposal. The NIRB truly appreciates everyone taking time out of a very busy summer season to share their knowledge, experience, and views with the Board during the written comment periods and in-person during the Community Roundtable sessions.

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Marjorie Kaviq Kaluraq  
Chairperson  
Nunavut Impact Review Board

**The Board's full Reconsideration Report and Recommendations is available from the Board's Public Registry at <https://www.nirb.ca/project/125767>:**

**For more information, the media may contact:**

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