



NIRB File No.: 23YN026
NPC File No.: 150072

July 7, 2023

To: The Honourable Joanna Quassa
Minister Responsible for Nunavut Arctic College
P.O Box 2410
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0

Sent via email: jquassa6@gov.nu.ca and mtaukie6@gov.nu.ca

Re: Screening Decision for York University's "Identifying Putative Microbial Drivers of Methane on Earth and Mars" Project Proposal, Qikiqtani (North Baffin) Region

Dear Honourable Minister:

On May 15, 2023, the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) received a referral to screen York University's "Identifying Putative Microbial Drivers of Methane on Earth and Mars" project proposal from the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC or Commission), with an accompanying positive conformity determination with the North Baffin Regional Land Use Plan.

Pursuant to Article 12, Sections 12.4.1 and 12.4.4 of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)* and s. 87 of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*, S.C. 2013, c. 14, s. 2 (*NuPPAA*), the NIRB commenced screening this project proposal and assigned it file number **23YN026**.

Following the assessment of all material information provided, the NIRB is recommending that a review of York University's "Identifying Putative Microbial Drivers of Methane on Earth and Mars" project is not required pursuant to paragraph 92(1)(a) of the *NuPPAA*.

Pursuant to its discretion under paragraph 92(2)(a) of the *NuPPAA*, the NIRB has determined that specific terms and conditions are appropriate for this project.

Accordingly, the NIRB is issuing the attached Screening Decision Report dated July 7, 2023, to the responsible Minister. The Screening Decision Report provides, among other things, the regulatory framework, project overview and the NIRB's assessment process, factors relevant for the determining significance of impacts and recommended project-specific terms and conditions.

Please note that the project proposal will not be enclosed due to the size of the electronic document and the limited bandwidth. However, an electronic copy of the project proposal is accessible online from the NIRB's online public registry at www.nirb.ca/project/125813.

Please note that, the Board only directly addresses these notice letters to those individuals considered to be a "responsible Minister with decision-making authority" for the project as set out under the *NuPPAA*. However, regulatory authorities and other authorizing agencies associated with a proposed project (e.g. Regional Inuit Associations, Nunavut Water Board) will continue to be copied on the Notice of Release of the Screening Decision Report. The NIRB is providing these parties with notice and access to the Board's Screening Decision Report as required under s. 200(2) and in support of these parties in the fulfillment of their responsibilities under the *NuPPAA* and the *Nunavut Agreement* to address, and as appropriate, implement, to the fullest extent possible, any relevant NIRB recommendations contained in the Screening Decision Report.

We look forward to receiving a response from the responsible Minister and the NIRB remains available for consultation with the Minister regarding this report as necessary. If you have any questions or require clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the NIRB's Director, Technical Services, Tara Arko at (867) 983-4611 or tarko@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,



Kaviq Kaluraq
Chairperson
Nunavut Impact Review Board

Enclosure (1): Screening Decision Report, NIRB File No.: 23YN026 (July 7, 2023)

cc: Lootie Toomasie, President of the Nunavut Water Board
Olayuk Akesuk, President of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association