



NIRB File No.: 25YN079

NIRB Public Registry Link: [www.nirb.ca/project/126250](http://www.nirb.ca/project/126250)

NPC File No.:150958

December 9, 2025

Jennifer Galloway  
Geological Survey of Canada (GSC),  
Calgary, AB  
T2L 2A7, Canada

Sent via email: [Jennifer.Galloway@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca](mailto:Jennifer.Galloway@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca)

**Re: Notice of Screening and Comment Request**

Dear Jennifer Galloway

The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral to screen Geological Survey of Canada's "Why is mercury rising in some northern lakes?" project proposal:

- 14<sup>th</sup> November 2025, the Nunavut Planning Commission noted noting positive conformity.
- On 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025, the NIRB received a complete application and assigned it file number 25YN079. Please reference this file number in all future related correspondence.

The NIRB has commenced screening the project proposal pursuant to the *Nunavut Agreement* and *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*<sup>1</sup> and by copy of this letter, **invites interested parties and municipalities potentially affected by the proposal to comment directly to the Nunavut Impact Review Board.**

SCOPE OF PROPOSED PROJECT

<b>Location</b>	Kivalliq Region, four lakes (Diana Lake, Itirklak Lake, Meliadine Lake, and Peter Lake) located near Rankin Inlet.
<b>Objective</b>	The Proponent intends to investigate why mercury levels are increasing in some northern lakes while remaining stable in others. The main goal of the study is to understand how mercury has accumulated in lake sediments over long periods of time and how factors such as climate change, watershed conditions,

<sup>1</sup> 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*)

	and human activities may be influencing these trends. The findings will support better land-use planning and help reduce potential risks to community health and the surrounding environment.
<b>Timeline</b>	August 1 to August 30, 2026 (short, seasonal Fieldwork will occur over a short 7–10-day period)

According to the project proposal, the scope of the project includes the following undertakings, works or activities:

- **Transportation**

- Travel to selected lakes using a helicopter equipped with floats.
- No overland routes, ATVs, or snowmobiles are proposed.

- **Field Team and Duration**

- A small field team operating for 7–10 days.
- Employment of 1–2 local wildlife monitors and a local interpreter.

- **Camp**

- No overnight camp will be established on the land or on ice. Work will be conducted as day trips from Rankin Inlet.

- **Fuel**

- Aviation fuel will be purchased directly from the pump in Rankin Inlet.

- **Sampling Activities**

- Collecting lake-bottom sediment samples using:
  1. A gravity corer (5–10 cm diameter, 0.5–1 m penetration)
  2. A freeze corer (if required), freezing ~3 cm of surface sediment)
- Sub-sampling on site (gravity cores) or in a laboratory (freeze cores)
- No drilling into ground or rock, and no disturbance beyond lake sediments.
- Laboratory analyses will occur in southern Canada, but all field sampling occurs entirely within Nunavut.

- **Waste Management**

- All temporary sampling materials (e.g., gloves, field consumables) will be returned to Rankin Inlet for proper disposal.

### *Inclusion or Exclusion of Scoping List*

The NIRB has identified *no* additional work or activities in relation to the project proposal. As a result, the NIRB will proceed with screening the project based on the scope as described above.

#### REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

Documents received and describing the proposal can be accessed from the NIRB's online public registry at [www.nirb.ca/project/126250](http://www.nirb.ca/project/126250) including:

- *NPC Conformity Determination letter,*
- *NPC Project Application*
- *NIRB's Online Application*
- *Technical summary,* and
- *Project Description.*

The NIRB may request additional information at any time during the process.

By copy of this letter, the NIRB is inviting interested parties and municipalities potentially affected by the project proposal to comment directly to the NIRB by **December 19, 2025**.

The NIRB would like parties to provide comments regarding:

- Whether the project proposal is likely to arouse significant public concern; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is likely to cause significant adverse eco-systemic or socio-economic effects; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is likely to cause significant adverse impacts on wildlife habitat or Inuit harvest activities; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is of a type where the potential adverse effects are highly predictable and mitigable with known technology, (and providing any recommended mitigation measures); and
- Any matter of importance to the Party related to the project proposal.

Please note that *proposed* project-specific terms and conditions, should the project proceed, have been attached for consideration and comment ([Appendix A](#)).

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Please send comments to the NIRB via email at [info@nirb.ca](mailto:info@nirb.ca), via fax at (867) 983-2594 or via the individual project dashboard for this assessment on the NIRB's online public registry at [www.nirb.ca/project/126250](http://www.nirb.ca/project/126250). Questions should be directed to the undersigned at [vnasit@nirb.ca](mailto:vnasit@nirb.ca).

Sincerely,



Viren Nasit  
Senior Impact Assessment Officer  
Nunavut Impact Review Board

Attachments: Appendix A: *Proposed* Project Specific Terms and Conditions

Enclosures (4): Public Notice of Screening (English, and Inuktitut)  
Comment Forms (English, and Inuktitut)

cc: Distribution List  
Luis Manzo, Kivalliq Inuit Association  
Ashley Aupaluktuq-Burton, Kivalliq Inuit Association  
Moshia Cote, Nunavut Research Institute  
Natalie D'Souza, Government of Nunavut - Department of Environment  
Municipality of Rankin inlet  
GN Environment Impact Assessment Inbox

## Appendix A: Proposed Project Specific Terms and Conditions

The following is a list of project-specific terms and conditions which, should the project proceed, may be recommended to be attached to any approval.

### General

1. Jennifer Galloway (the Proponent) shall maintain a copy of the Project Terms and Conditions at the site of operation at all times and make it accessible to enforcement officers upon request.
2. The Proponent shall operate in accordance with all commitments stated in correspondence provided to the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC File No.:150958), and the NIRB (Online Application Form, Project Summary, and Additional Information, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025). This information should be accessible to enforcement officers upon request.
3. The Proponent shall operate the site in accordance with all applicable Acts, Regulations and Guidelines.
4. The Proponent shall ensure that it meets the standards and/or limits as set out in the authorizing agencies' permits or licences as required for this project.
5. The Proponent shall ensure that all personnel, staff and contractors are adequately trained prior to commencement of all project activities, and shall be made aware of all operational plans, management plans, guidelines and Proponent commitments relating to the project.

### Water courses/Water bodies (including fresh and marine waters)

6. The Proponent shall ensure that no disturbance of the stream bed, lakebed or the banks of any definable watercourse be permitted, except where deemed necessary for maintaining project-specific operational commitments or approved by a responsible authority in cases of spill management.
7. The Proponent shall not deposit, nor permit the deposit of any fuel, chemicals, wastes (including wastewater) or sediment into any water body. The Proponent should have in place an Emergency Spill Response Plan that is approved by the appropriate authorizing agency(ies).

### Waste Management

8. The Proponent shall manage all hazardous and non-hazardous waste including food, domestic wastes, debris and petroleum-based chemicals (e.g., greases, gasoline, glycol-based antifreeze) in such a manner to avoid release into the environment and access to wildlife at all times until disposed of appropriately or at an approved facility.
9. The Proponent shall dispose of all combustible wastes as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies. All non-combustible wastes from the project site shall be removed to an approved facility for disposal.

### Air Quality

10. The Proponent shall eliminate unnecessary idling to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible.

## Wildlife – General

11. The Proponent shall not substantially alter or damage or destroy any wildlife habitat in conducting this operation unless otherwise authorized by the appropriate authorizing agencies.
12. The Proponent shall not chase, weary, harass or molest wildlife. This includes persistently circling, chasing, hovering over, pursuing or in any other way harass wildlife, or disturbing large groups of animals.
13. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.
14. The Proponent shall ensure that all wildlife have the right-of-way on any roads or trails. Vehicles are required to slow down or stop and wait to permit the free and unrestricted movement of wildlife across roads or trails at any location.

## Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance

15. The Proponent shall carry out all phases of the project in a manner that protects migratory birds and avoids harming, killing or disturbing migratory birds or destroying, disturbing or taking their nests or eggs. In this regard, the Proponent shall take into account Environment and Climate Change Canada's *Avoidance Guidelines*. The Proponent's actions in applying the *Avoidance Guidelines* shall be in compliance with the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* and with the *Species at Risk Act*.
16. The Proponent shall not disturb or destroy the nests or eggs of any birds. If active nests of any birds are discovered or located (i.e., with eggs or young), the Proponent shall avoid these areas until nesting is complete, and the young have naturally left the vicinity of the nest by establishing a protection buffer zone<sup>2</sup> appropriate for the species and the surrounding habitat.
17. The Proponent shall avoid the seaward site of seabird colonies and areas used by flocks of migrating waterfowl, a minimum distance away on the recommendation of the appropriate authorizing agencies.
18. The Proponent shall not pursue seabirds or waterbirds swimming on the water surface and shall avoid concentrations of these birds if encountered on the water.

## Aircraft Flight Restrictions

19. The Proponent shall not alter flight paths to approach wildlife and avoid flying directly over animals.
20. The Proponent shall plan flight paths that minimize flights over known habitat likely to have birds or concentrations of wildlife. Aircraft should avoid critical and sensitive wildlife areas at all times by choosing alternate flight corridors.
21. The Proponent shall ensure that aircraft/helicopter do not, unless for emergency, touch-down in areas where wildlife are present.

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<sup>2</sup> Recommended setback distances to define buffer zones have been established by Environment and Climate Change Canada for different bird groups nesting in tundra habitat and can be found at [www.ec.gc.ca/paom-itmb](http://www.ec.gc.ca/paom-itmb).

22. The Proponent shall advise all pilots of relevant flight restrictions and enforce their application over the project area, including flight paths to/from the project area.

**Other**

23. The Proponent should engage with local residents regarding planned activities in the area and should solicit available Inuit Qaujimaningit and information regarding current recreational and traditional usage of the project area which may inform project activities. Posting of translated public notices and direct engagement with potentially interested groups and individuals prior to undertaking project activities is strongly encouraged.

24. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.

25. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.