



Executive Summary

Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) participated in the assessment of Agnico Eagle Mines' proposed Whale Tail Pit Expansion Project in the context of its role as a federal department with expertise in permafrost and hydrogeology. NRCan conducted a technical review to assess the technical merit of the information presented in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) Addendum and provided eleven information requests for the NIRB's consideration on permafrost, terrain stability, and hydrogeology.

Permafrost occurs throughout the project area and NRCan's review focused on the terrain sensitivity and permafrost issues and the design of project components for which these aspects of the physical environment are important. NRCan submitted Information Requests (IRs) in February 2019 for further clarifications regarding baseline data in the project area including ground ice conditions and permafrost distribution beneath water bodies in the project area. Information was also requested regarding analysis to support the design of the Waste Rock Storage Facility (WRSF).

NRCan's hydrogeology review focused on the hydrogeological modelling prepared for the FEIS Addendum. NRCan submitted Information Requests (IRs) in February 2019 for further clarifications regarding model input parameters, a complete conceptual model of the Whale Tail and IVR pits, the distribution of hydraulic conductivities, and recharge and discharge rates for water bodies in the project area.

AEM provided responses to NRCan's Information Requests and NRCan is generally satisfied with the information provided for this phase of project development. Further studies and monitoring will be required to support detailed design and construction. However, within the context of the department's areas of expertise, NRCan finds the conclusions presented in the FEIS Addendum to be reasonable. NRCan appreciates the Proponent's responses to NRCan's requests for information.

NRCan is supportive of conservative approaches to limit adverse environmental impacts. NRCan maintains that, for this current stage of assessment, there is sufficient information to proceed, but it supports further measures to characterize the hydrogeological regime of the project site and supports the gathering of further hydrogeological data, whether this be through additional groundwater monitoring wells or other means. NRCan is also supportive of robust monitoring to ensure that hydrogeological impacts are tracked and minimized.

NRCan appreciates the opportunity provided by the Nunavut Impact Review Board to participate in this review. We would be pleased to answer any questions regarding our comments from the Board, its staff, the Proponent, or other Parties to this review.