



Mr. Jamie Quesnel
Regional Manager
Permitting and Regulatory Affairs
Agnico Eagle Mines Limited - Meadowbank Division
Baker Lake, Nunavut, Canada
X0C 0A0

January 20, 2020

Subject: Whale Tail Pit Expansion Project - Meadowbank Division
Review of the Revised Assessment of Alternatives Report for Mine Waste Disposal (Lake A53) - Consultations on a Schedule 2 amendment of the *Metal and Diamond Mining Effluent Regulations (MDMER)*

Dear Mr. Quesnel,

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) has received the newest version of the Assessment of Alternatives (AA) report, dated December 2019, that was revised based on comments formulated on November 21 2019 by ECCC's Mining and Processing Division according to the *Guidelines for the assessment of alternatives for mine waste disposal (Guidelines)*. The revised report, prepared by ERM on behalf of Agnico Eagle Mines Limited – Meadowbank Division (the proponent) and entitled "Whale Tail Pit Expansion Project: Attenuation Pond Alternatives Assessment Report", was once again reviewed against the *Guidelines*.

ECCC is of the view that the proponent has adequately addressed all comments that stemmed from the revised report. The report, related to the use of Lake A53 as a Tailings Impoundment Area (attenuation pond), is ready for consultations as part of the process for amending Schedule 2 of the MDMER. While the report is ready for consultations, please find below a few minor comments the proponent may choose to address. It could be expected that following consultations and feedback received from Indigenous groups and the public, additional changes to the AA report may be needed. Note that the AA report is the entire responsibility of the proponent.

Also note that ECCC is currently reviewing the assessment of alternatives report for the Waste Rock Storage Facility (Appendix D) and will provide comments separately in the next days.



Should you have any questions or concerns with regards to this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at 819-420-7369 or via email at corinne.proux@canada.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Corinne Proux', with a stylized, flowing script.

Corinne Proux
Senior Program Engineer
Mining and Processing Division
Environment and Climate Change Canada

cc: Eva Walker, Environmental Assessment Coordinator, ECCC
Patrick Koch, Head - Mining Technical Analysis Unit, ECCC
Nancy Seymour, Manager, Mining Section, ECCC
Erin Reimer, Technical Advisor I, NIRB
Boyan Tracz, Fisheries Protection Biologist, Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Nicola Lower, Principal Consultant, ERM

Attachment: Minor Comments on Revised AA Report (December 2019)

Minor Comments on Revised AA Report (December 2019)

- The fifth paragraph of the Executive Summary (page i) is aligned with the previous and not the latest version of the AA report, more specifically in regards to the threshold and pre-screening criteria.
- Section 1.3.1 of the report should state that “Timelines may be quicker than the average 12-18 months **for streamlined applications**, but these are assessed on a case by case basis”. – Suggested addition in bold
- The fourth paragraph of Subsection 1.3.2 should read “This step identifies a list of possible **attenuation pond** locations that are reasonable ...”. – Suggested modification in bold
- Subsection 5.3.1 should mention “nine” and not “seven” candidate alternatives.
- In Subsection 6.5.2, the report should mention that Lake A53 is connected to “three” rather than “two” other waterbodies. They are Lake A17, Lake A54 and Lake A52.
- It is also suggested to update paragraph 6.5.2 to include all overprinted fish frequented streams (same for Subsection 6.5.4 and Table 6-6).