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Qikiqtani Inuit Association

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September 22, 2020

Tara Arko
Director, Technical Services
Nunavut Impact Review Board

Re: MHTO Comment on Draft Pre-Hearing Conference and Community Roundtable Agenda

Ms. Arko,

The Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) is writing to support the concerns raised by the Mittimatalik Hunters and Trappers Organization (MHTO) in their September 18, 2020 letter to the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB). QIA has also received and reviewed the Final Agenda for the upcoming Community Roundtable (CRT) and Pre-Hearing Conference. QIA supports the MHTO request that NIRB amend the agenda for the September 28 – 30, 2020 CRT to allow Intervenors to make short presentations should they wish to do so (or clarify that a future CRT opportunity will be available which allows for impacted Inuit communities' presentations).

QIA did not file formal comments regarding the agenda for the upcoming CRT in Pond Inlet (and linked hubs). QIA noted in a September 16, 2020 email to NIRB that the draft CRT agenda had no time allotted for intervenors to present at the CRT, and QIA requested flexibility to respond to any community representatives' questions to QIA. QIA did not request formal intervenor presentation time for itself or other parties.

QIA appreciates the valid concern subsequently raised by the MHTO, which wrote to NIRB that the current CRT agenda may restrict the ability of the affected Inuit communities to fully understand the scope and impacts of the Phase 2 project. The CRT participants may be constrained in fully understanding the impacts of the project, and current proposed mitigation and accommodation, if Project information is provided only by Baffinland and there is no opportunity for the Inuit parties to share information with one another.

Furthermore, during the September 14 – 18, 2020 Technical Meeting, the impacted Inuit communities asked questions which were outside the scope of the Technical Meeting and more appropriate for the CRT. However, the impacted Inuit communities did not always appear to have a full understanding of the relationship between the Technical Meeting and CRT processes. For instance, there was confusion about the fact that different community representatives may be present at the CRT than were present at the Technical Meeting (and that intervenors will not be present in the discussions at the CRT table, only community representatives). This led to a situation where impacted Inuit communities voluntarily

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deferred technical questions to the CRT during the Technical Meeting process without appearing to understand that they may not have the opportunity to raise those issues at the CRT due to the CRT format.

QIA recognizes that a CRT before a Pre-Hearing Conference is different than one before the Public Hearing, and supplements later opportunities for the impacted communities to raise their concerns with one another and with NIRB. QIA asks NIRB, however, to consider flexibility in the upcoming CRT agenda to address the procedural concerns of the impacted Inuit communities by allowing time for Intervenor presentations. Alternatively, QIA requests that NIRB clarify the future opportunity available to the impacted communities to share their presentations with one another (for instance, at a future CRT held in conjunction with the Final Hearing).

Sincerely,

Jared Ottenhof
Director, Qikiqtani Nunalirijikkut