

NUNAVUT IMPACT REVIEW BOARD

BACK RIVER ENERGY CENTRE PROJECT PROPOSAL

HEARING

VOLUME 1

Cambridge Bay, Nunavut

February 27, 2024

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1 Proceedings taken at Community Hall, Cambridge Bay,
2 Nunavut

3

4 February 27, 2024 Morning Session

5

6 NUNAVUT IMPACT REVIEW BOARD

7 A. Ehaloak Chair of Hearing

8 H. Ohokannoak Panel Member

9 P. Omingmakyok Panel Member

10 C. Emrick Panel Member

11 P. Kusugak Panel Member

12 G. Alikut Panel Member

13

14 NUNAVUT IMPACT REVIEW BOARD STAFF

15 T. Arko Director of Technical
16 Services

17 R. Sinclair Executive Director

18 K. Morrison Manager Impact Assessment

19 K. Gillard Senior Impact Assessment
20 Officer

21 L. Klaasen Technical Advisor II

22 E. Koide Technical Advisor III

23 T. Meadows Legal Counsel

24

25

26

1 PROPONENT

2

3 B2GOLD CORPORATION (REGISTERED SPEAKERS)

4 M. Keefe Manager, Environment

5 J. Kaiyogana Community Liaison Officer

6 D. Stansbury Senior Vice President,
7 Engineering and Project
8 Evaluations

9 C. Ferizovic Manager, Indigenous &
10 Northern Affairs

11 G. Sharam Consultant Wildlife
12 Biologist

13 B. Edwards Director of Development
14 at NextEra Energy

15 C. Kowbel Legal Counsel

16

17 INTERVENORS

18

19 NUNAVUT TUNNGAVIK INCORPORATED (REGISTERED SPEAKERS)

20 D. Fredlund Chief Operating Officer

21 G. Nirlungayuk Director of Wildlife and
22 Environment

23 H. Uniuqsaraq (Remote) Director of
24 Self-Determination

25 B. Dean (Remote) Assistant Director of
26 Wildlife and Environment

1	D. Lee (Remote)	Wildlife Biologist
2	P. Lavallee (Remote)	Wildlife and Environment
3		Consultant
4	N. Gonzalez (Remote)	Legal Counsel
5	A. Yuan (Remote)	Legal Counsel
6	R. Suluk (Remote)	Senior Advisor, Land Use
7		Planning and Regulatory
8		Review
9		
10	KITIKMEOT INUIT ASSOCIATION (REGISTERED SPEAKERS)	
11	J. Roesch	Senior Hope Bay Project
12		Officer
13	C. Chui	Consultant
14	J. Eetoolook	Vice President of Lands
15		Resources and Environment
16	J. Abouchar (Remote)	Legal Counsel
17	K. Morton (Remote)	Legal Counsel
18		
19		
20	GOVERNMENT OF NUNAVUT (REGISTERED SPEAKERS)	
21	J. Buller	Avatiliriniq Coordinator
22	J. Waldinger	Project Manager, Research
23		& Monitoring
24	S. Ataullahjan	Legal Counsel
25	J. Azonaha	Project Manager, Impact
26		Assessment

1	L. Leclerc (Remote)	Regional Biologist,
2		Kitikmeot Region
3	S. Symes (Remote)	Consultant
4	P. Fuentes (Remote)	Project Manager, Impact
5		Assessment
6		
7	CROWN-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA	
8	(REGISTERED SPEAKERS)	
9	S. Dewar	Acting Regional Director
10		General
11	J. MacInnis	Acting Environmental
12		Assessment Coordinator
13	L. Gracia Zayas	Environmental Policy
14		Analyst
15	K. Pawley (Remote)	Director
16	J. Walsh (Remote)	Senior Environmental
17		Policy Analyst
18	M. Staniewski (Remote)	Environmental Policy
19		Analyst
20	A. Chaikine (Remote)	Acting Manager Impact
21		Assessment
22	R. Bingly (Remote)	Senior Environmental
23		Assessment Specialist
24	D. Abernathy (Remote)	Regional Socioeconomic
25		Analyst
26		

1 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE CANADA (REGISTERED
2 SPEAKERS)

3 S. Mallon (Remote) Acting Senior Environmental
4 Assessment Officer

5 R. Wykes (Remote) Senior Environmental
6 Assessment Officer

7

8 DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA (REGISTERED
9 SPEAKERS)

10 T. Leclerc-Beaulieu (Remote) Fish and Habitat Protection
11 Program Biologist

12 A. LaFlamme (Remote) Biologist

13

14 HEALTH CANADA (REGISTERED SPEAKERS)

15 C. Dutchak Impact Assessment
16 Specialist

17 M. Goncalves Environmental Assessment
18 Coordination Specialist

19 D. Kitchen (Remote) Regional Manager

20 A. Thevenot (Remote) Senior Health In Impact
21 Assessment Specialist

22 P. Partridge (Remote) Impact Assessment
23 Specialist

24

25

26

1 NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA (REGISTERED SPEAKERS)
2 V. Narine (Remote) Senior Environmental
3 Assessment Officer
4
5 TRANSPORT CANADA (REGISTERED SPEAKERS)
6 S. Kidd Regional Environmental
7 Advisor
8
9 NORTHERN PROJECTS MANAGEMENT OFFICE (REGISTERED
10 SPEAKERS)
11 K. Bakker Project Manager
12 M. Friesen Project Manager
13
14 DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (REGISTERED SPEAKERS)
15 J. McHattie Legal Counsel
16
17 GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (REGISTERED
18 SPEAKERS)
19 J. Hodson (Remote) Environmental
20 Assessment/Wildlife
21 Biologist
22 J. Adamczewski (Remote) Biologist
23 N. Njerere (Remote) Environmental Assessment
24 Analyst
25
26

1 OMINGMAKTOK (REGISTERED SPEAKERS)
2 P. Kapolak Community Representative
3
4 KINGAOK (REGISTERED SPEAKERS)
5 A. Roche Community Representative
6
7 CAMBRIDGE BAY (REGISTERED SPEAKERS)
8 P. Ehaloak Community Representative
9 A. Gerbrandt Community Representative
10
11 KUGLUKTUK (REGISTERED SPEAKERS)
12 B. Adjun Community Representative
13 A. Dumond Community Representative
14
15 GJOA HAVEN (REGISTERED SPEAKERS)
16 P. Akkikungnak Community Representative
17
18 TALOYOAK (REGISTERED SPEAKERS)
19 M. Aleekee Community Representative
20 J. Ashevak Community Representative
21
22 KUGAARUK (REGISTERED SPEAKERS)
23 C. Ningark Community Representative
24 B. Immingark Community Representative
25
26

1 INTERPRETERS/TRANSLATORS

2 J. Tuktoo Language Translator

3 C. Amautinar Language Translator

4

5 COURT REPORTERS

6 D. Lopez, CSR(A), RPR Official Court Reporter

7 A. Vidal, CSR(A), RPR, RMR Official Court Reporter

8

9 R. Dempster Sound Technician

10

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1 (PROCEEDINGS COMMENCED AT 9:04 AM)

2 Opening Remarks

3 THE CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. My
4 name is Albert Ehaloak, and I'm the vice chair of the
5 Nunavut Impact Review Board or NIRB, and I will be
6 chairing this public hearing.

7 On behalf of the Board, I would like to welcome
8 you to the start of the NIRB's public hearing
9 associated with the NIRB's assessment of B2Gold energy
10 centre proposal, which is a modification of the
11 existing Back River gold mine project. For those of
12 you attending in Cambridge Bay, welcome to Cambridge
13 Bay. And for those of you participating over the
14 audio-video link, thank you for participating.

15 Just a quick reminder to turn off your cell phones
16 or put them on silent before we begin.

17 We are starting the meeting with an opening prayer
18 given by Joe Ashevak.

19 Joe.

20 Opening Prayer

21 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Joe, for that
22 prayer to start the day.

23 Now I would like to invite Wayne Gregory, mayor of
24 Cambridge Bay, to giving opening remarks.

25 Wayne.

26 W. GREGORY: Good morning. Ulaakut. Thank

1 you, all delegates, Nunavut Impact Review Board,
2 B2Gold, VIP, and all spectators, and everybody that is
3 here in our warm, welcoming Cambridge Bay.

4 We'd like to thank you for being here, taking your
5 time to be a part of this very important meeting, and
6 we want to welcome you during your time and your stay
7 here in Cambridge Bay, and we want to let you know on
8 behalf of the Municipality of Cambridge Bay we have
9 full support, we have recognition in the audience, and
10 we're here for you.

11 So please enjoy your time. Please take your time
12 to listen to each other, get value from your input, and
13 move forward, and we want to thank you for being here
14 in Cambridge Bay. Your mayor, Wayne Gregory. Ulaakut.

15 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Wayne, for that
16 opening remarks.

17 Before I get too far into the details of the
18 Board's assessment, I want to describe the format of
19 this hearing so everyone is aware of all the
20 participants here in the room or participating through
21 the audio-visual feed.

22 Following the end of the public health orders
23 required during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board has
24 returned to its in-person proceedings, and the Board
25 continues to prioritize holding our public hearing in
26 person in a closely -- or closest potential impact

1 community to allow the public to participate and speak
2 to the parties and to the Board directly.

3 However, due to the limits on availability of the
4 rooms in Cambridge Bay and with the number of community
5 reps expected to attend, the Board has provided an
6 audio-video link for this hearing so that the parties
7 providing support to the representatives in the room
8 can view the proceedings remotely and will be able to
9 speak to provide following-up support if required.

10 For everyone participating by the audio-visual
11 feed, be assured that we are linked to you, and if you
12 need to speak up as experts, we will make every effort
13 to link you so that everyone in the room can hear you.
14 As we may be switching back and forth between the
15 in-person video and the audio links during the hearing,
16 we ask everyone to be patient in waiting for your turn
17 to speak.

18 B2Gold and the formal intervenors have provided
19 the Board with a list of key speakers who will be my
20 primary contact. When a question is directed to the
21 proponent or the intervenors, I will direct the
22 question to your key speaker who can then turn over the
23 microphone to the member of their team who will answer.

24 If you are participating online, when I say your
25 name, please click on the raise-your-hand button at the
26 bottom of the screen, and this will help the techs

1 identify you more quickly so that they can unmute your
2 line to turn on your camera.

3 So that everyone is aware, because the Board has
4 prioritized in-person participation, although the Board
5 will do everything we can to ensure that the remote
6 links remain stable and available, as we all know,
7 sometimes the technology is interrupted due to
8 circumstances outside the Board's control. If this
9 occurs, the Board will continue to work with the
10 in-person proceedings as planned while we work to
11 restore the online links.

12 We thank everyone in advance for your flexibility
13 and patience as we work through any interruptions in
14 the remote access.

15 Simultaneous interpretation of the proceedings is
16 being provided through the meetings from the
17 interpreters here in Cambridge Bay. In the Zoom feed,
18 you can choose the language feed you want to hear, but
19 when you go to speak, you may have to turn off the
20 interpretation feed to avoid feedback.

21 For the people here in Cambridge Bay, receivers
22 are available at the sign-in table, and the receivers
23 are set to -- channel zero is the floor, Channel 1 is
24 Inuktitut, Channel 2 is English. If you are having
25 trouble hearing the proceedings, please see our
26 technical support, Ryan Dempster from PIDO, at the side

1 of the room.

2 If you have any issues with the online feed,
3 please email --

4 T. MEADOWS: Sorry to interrupt you,
5 Mr. Chair.

6 I believe sound tech is telling me that the
7 channels are different than what we had thought.

8 R. DEMPSTER: Yeah. Channel 1 is floor,
9 2 is English, 3 is Inuktitut.

10 T. MEADOWS: Okay. So Channel 1 is the
11 floor, Channel 2 is English, Channel 3 is Inuktitut.
12 Sorry, Mr. Chair.

13 THE CHAIR: Thank you for that.

14 If you're having any issues with the online feed,
15 please email Kelli Gillard, kgillard@NIRB.ca.

16 Just a quick reminder to everyone participating in
17 this hearing that no one is permitted to record or
18 rebroadcast the images, video, or audio of these
19 proceedings in any form without the express written
20 consent of the Nunavut Impact Review Board. Failing to
21 follow these directions may result in sanctions by the
22 Board, including suspending access to the live feed or
23 being asked to leave the hall. The NIRB is generating
24 a transcript from these proceedings, which will be
25 available following the hearing on NIRB's public
26 registry.

1 Now that you know how to participate in the
2 proceedings, I will give you some background about the
3 purpose of the proceedings of this hearing.

4 As I stated already, my name is Albert Ehaloak,
5 the vice chair of the Nunavut Impact Review Board, and
6 I am originally from Cambridge Bay and now live in
7 Iqaluit. I have served with the Board for several
8 terms, starting with my first term which commenced in
9 2002. As the Board's chairperson Kaviq Kaluraq is
10 unable to join us here today, I will be chairing this
11 hearing.

12 With me today are my fellow board members. We are
13 the decision-makers for this assessment. Now I will
14 turn over the microphone for them to introduce
15 themselves in order starting from the far end of the
16 table.

17 Guy.

18 G. ALIKUT: Qujannamiik.

19 I am from Arviat. I am also a board member for
20 13 years, I think, and the -- welcome everyone to this
21 meeting. Qujannamiik.

22 P. KUSUGAK: Peter Kusugak, CIRNAC
23 appointee.

24 C. EMRICK: Good morning. It's Catherine
25 Emrick.

26 My home is in Calgary, and it's a pleasure to be

1 in Cambridge Bay. I have been with the board for six
2 years, and I welcome everybody here today.

3 P. OMINGMAKYOK: My name is Phillip
4 Omingmakyok, and I'm from Kugluktuk. I'm a Nunavut
5 Impact Review board member.

6 H. OHOKANNOAK: I'm Henry Ohokannoak. I'm
7 originally from Cambridge Bay. I live here. I have
8 been appointed in 2005 and still continue to be a NIRB
9 board member today.

10 Thank you for coming to our community and welcome,
11 everyone. In order to have our -- our meeting go well,
12 please be patient with us. Thank you once again for
13 coming to our community.

14 THE CHAIR: Today the Panel is supported
15 by the following people: When I say your name, I ask
16 that you wave so that the people can see you. Robbin
17 Sinclaire, executive director; Tara Arko, director of
18 technical services; Keith Morrison, manager of impact
19 assessment; Leah Klaasen, technical advisor II; Emily
20 Koide, technical advisor III; Kelli Gillard, senior
21 technical advisor; Brydon Beattie, communications and
22 systems coordinator; Lena Atatahak, administrative
23 support.

24 Also joining us is our legal counsel, Teresa
25 Meadows of Meadows Law.

26 For simultaneous interpretation, we have

1 interpreters Josie Tuktoo, a NIRB staff member; joined
2 by Christopher Amautinuar.

3 Assisting with us our sound system, video link,
4 interpretation, and sound recording, we have from PIDO
5 Ryan Dempster. If you are having any issues with the
6 headset or audio or video feeds, please ask Ryan for
7 assistance.

8 To ensure the Board has an accurate record of the
9 public hearing, we will be keeping a transcript of
10 these proceedings. We have Andres Vidal and Derek
11 Lopez, court reporters from Dicta Court Reporting, here
12 to prepare the transcript. To assist our court
13 reporters, I ask that all parties please state their
14 name before they speak every time.

15 Now that you know the Board and the support staff,
16 I want to give you some details about the purpose,
17 structure, and agenda of this public hearing.

18 The Board is holding this public hearing to hear
19 evidence, ask questions, and listen to comments,
20 concerns, and knowledge shared by the intervenors,
21 community representatives, and members of the public to
22 assess the potential ecosystemic and socioeconomic
23 effects of B2Gold's Nunavut's energy centre proposal,
24 which is a modification of B2Gold's existing Back River
25 gold mine project.

26 B2Gold's assessment of the potential effects of

1 the project proposal has been filed with the Board in
2 the form of an addendum to the final environmental
3 impact statement and builds on the Board's previous
4 assessment of the Back River gold mine project.

5 The addendum and supporting documents provided by
6 B2Gold has been reviewed and commented on by the formal
7 intervenors currently around the table. We will be
8 asking questions and making presentations about their
9 interventions during the technical support -- or during
10 the technical part of this hearing over the next two
11 days.

12 When the technical session concludes tomorrow, the
13 Board will start the community roundtable part of this
14 hearing. During the community roundtable, community
15 representatives here in Cambridge Bay will move to
16 occupy the seats around the table, and the general
17 public in attendance will also have the opportunity to
18 express their views, share their knowledge, and ask
19 questions of B2Gold and the intervenors regarding this
20 change to the Back River gold mine project.

21 At the close of the community roundtable session
22 on Tuesday, a single spokesperson chosen by each
23 community will give short closing remarks summarizing
24 if their community concerns have been addressed and if
25 the community supports the proposal going ahead or not.

26 I want to emphasize how important it is that

1 everyone participate fully in this hearing to ensure
2 that the board has a full and fair basis for our
3 decision and recommendations. The Board has structured
4 this hearing to support the participation to the
5 greatest extent possible.

6 After the public hearing has concluded and the
7 public hearing record is closed, the Board will
8 determine whether or not the proposed amendment should
9 be allowed to proceed to the permitting stage based on
10 all the evidence, information, knowledge, and comments
11 and concerns provided to the Board throughout the
12 assessment.

13 Within 45 days from the close of the public
14 hearing record, the Board will provide its final report
15 and recommendations to the Minister of Northern Affairs
16 and other responsible government ministers for their
17 consideration.

18 If the Board decides that the changes proposed by
19 B2Gold can go ahead, the Board will also make
20 recommendations about any changes or additions to the
21 terms and conditions of the existing Back River project
22 certificates that are required to limit the potential
23 for impacts.

24 The responsible ministers will then have the
25 option to -- of accepting, varying, or rejecting the
26 Board's report and associated recommendations as set

1 out under the Nunavut Agreement and the Nunavut
2 Planning and Project Assessment Act.

3 As many of you know, the project certificate was
4 originally issued to Sabina Gold & Silver in December
5 2017. Recently, in 2023, the Board was advised that
6 the Back River project has been acquired by B2Gold.
7 Reflecting this change, the Board will also be updating
8 the project certificate to reflect the new ownership
9 and responsibilities of the -- for compliance as
10 requested to -- by Sabina B2Gold. And for the purpose
11 of this assessment, the Board will now refer to the
12 project proponent as "B2Gold".

13 Hard copies of the agenda are available on the
14 public tables at the back of the room. Please pick one
15 up and follow along. All times quoted in the agenda
16 are Mountain Time. Unless I advise otherwise, we will
17 start each day at 9 AM and break at 5 PM for dinner.

18 The proceedings will start with the technical
19 session today focusing on summaries of the proponent's
20 assessment and the intervenor's final written
21 submission, and the Board may include an evening
22 session if the Board considers it is needed to keep on
23 track with their agenda.

24 We will complete the technical session during the
25 day tomorrow and start the community roundtable. We
26 will have a scheduled evening session tomorrow to

1 ensure that the members of the public who may be
2 working during the day have an opportunity to
3 participate tomorrow night.

4 On the morning of Day 3, we will finish the
5 community roundtable with closing remarks from the
6 community representatives. The Board will then close
7 the public hearing with closing remarks from the
8 proponent, intervenors, and the Board.

9 We plan to have one 15-minute break in the morning
10 and one in the afternoon. I will let everyone know
11 when we're coming up to a break time. We will
12 generally break for lunch at 12 PM, reconvening at
13 1:15. We will have an evening session -- when we have
14 an evening session, we will break around 5 PM, and
15 we'll come back for the evening session at 6:30 until
16 9 PM.

17 Coffee and tea are provided in the hall during the
18 meetings.

19 Now that we have gone through the structure of the
20 meeting, I'll provide a short description about the
21 changes to the Back River project being proposed in the
22 Back River energy centre proposal and considered by the
23 Board and the steps that have been completed in the
24 NIRB's assessment to date.

25 We will be hearing directly from B2Gold with a
26 more detailed project description following this

1 introduction, so I will keep my remarks brief.

2 After several years of assessment, in December
3 2017, the original Back River gold project was approved
4 to proceed, and the NIRB issued Project Certificate
5 Number 007 to the original owner project, Sabina Gold &
6 Silver Corporation.

7 The project certificate has 94 terms and
8 conditions designed to limit the potential for the
9 project to have negative effects. The Back River gold
10 project is located approximately 400 kilometres
11 southwest of the community of Cambridge Bay,
12 95 kilometres southeast of the southern end of Bathurst
13 Inlet, and 520 kilometres northeast of Yellowknife,
14 Northwest Territories.

15 The Back River project includes two main
16 development areas called the "Goose property" and the
17 "marine laydown area" located in Bathurst Inlet. The
18 two areas are connected with a winter ice road. Open
19 pit and underground mine are planned to each -- or to
20 reach four key gold deposits.

21 With its energy centre proposal, B2Gold is seeking
22 to change the project by adding new alternative energy
23 components to reduce the use of diesel generators to
24 power the site.

25 The additional components include the installation
26 and operation of 13 wind turbines close to the Goose

1 camp; the installation of 5 to 7 kilometres of
2 electrical transmission lines that will be laid down on
3 the ground; the construction of a 400-metre by
4 400-metre electrical station pad, including a 200-metre
5 by 400-metre solar array and battery energy storage
6 facility consisting of 10 sea cans.

7 The current energy centre proposal was referred to
8 the NIRB's assessment on August 12th, 2022. After the
9 Board received clarification from B2Gold and input from
10 the parties on the proposal, in January 2023, the NIRB
11 determined that the assessment of the energy centre
12 proposal would be assessed as a formal reconsideration
13 of the terms and conditions of the Project Certificate
14 Number 0007.

15 Under Section 12.8.2 of the Nunavut Agreement and
16 the Section 112 of the Nunavut Planning and Project
17 Assessment Act, in March 2023, NIRB reviewed B2Gold's
18 assessment of the project -- or potential impacts of
19 these proposed changes to the Back River gold project
20 as provided by B2Gold in its final impact statement
21 addendum and determined the addendum conformed to the
22 Board's guidelines, and the Board initiated a technical
23 review stage of the Board's assessment.

24 As part of the technical review process,
25 intervenors and interested parties provided information
26 requests and technical review comments on the proposal,

1 and B2Gold responded by providing additional
2 information, commitments, and responses.

3 The NIRB held its community information session in
4 the communities identified by the responsible ministers
5 as potentially affected by the Back River energy
6 proposal, Cambridge Bay, Kugluktuk, Gjoa Haven and
7 Kuugaarak, and Taloyoak in early May 2023.

8 However, due to mechanical issues with flights as
9 well as the wildfire evacuations near Yellowknife, the
10 Board did not complete the community information
11 session in Kugluktuk or in the three Athabasca
12 Denesuline communities in northern Saskatchewan.

13 The technical meetings, community roundtable, and
14 prehearing conference for the file was held here in --
15 in person here in Cambridge Bay in October 2023.

16 During the community roundtable sessions, representatives
17 from the potentially affected Kitikmeot communities of
18 Cambridge Bay, Kugluktuk, Omingmaktok, and Kingaok,
19 Bathurst Inlet, Gjoa Haven, Kugaaruk, and Taloyoak were
20 invited to participate. Representatives from the
21 Saskatchewan Denesuline communities of Fond du Lac,
22 Hatchet Lake, and Black Lake also participated.

23 On November 24, 2023, NIRB issued its prehearing
24 conference decision report advising interested parties
25 and the public that the Board has directed that the
26 energy centre proposal was ready to proceed to the

1 public hearing stage of the Board's assessment. In the
2 Board's report, the Board also provided notice that the
3 public hearing would be held in Cambridge Bay on these
4 dates.

5 Anyone interested in looking at any of the
6 documentation associated with the NIRB's assessment --
7 NIRB Board's assessment of the energy centre proposal,
8 please speak to the NIRB board staff as they can
9 provide you with an opportunity to review electronic
10 copies of anything you might need. This documentation
11 is also available from the Board's online public
12 registry, and our staff can direct you to the relevant
13 part of the website.

14 Now I turn to some remaining housekeeping items.
15 I would like to notify all parties that these
16 proceedings may be attended by members of the media.
17 The Board asks that any members of the media joining us
18 here today to sign in as you enter the hall and wear a
19 press badge or similar identification throughout these
20 proceedings so that it is clear to parties which media
21 outlet you're representing.

22 Any participants who are approached by the media,
23 it remains up to you as to whether you wish to speak
24 with the media. We ask that the media interviews be
25 conducted outside this room, and reminds the media and
26 everyone who is attending this public hearing or

1 participating in these proceedings remotely that the
2 Board prohibits recording these proceedings in any
3 format, including capturing images, video, or audio of
4 the live feed without the Board's express written
5 consent. We also asked that the media joining the
6 proceedings throughout the audio-visual feed must
7 provide notice to Robbin Sinclaire, the Board's
8 executive director at rsinclaire@nirb.ca, and inquiries
9 for this information from the media representatives
10 should also be sent to Robbin.

11 The Board welcomes the media providing information
12 about these meetings to those who cannot attend.
13 However, I remind everyone that the Board staff and the
14 Board themselves cannot take any questions or provide
15 interviews to the media or make public comments
16 regarding these meetings while we are underway.

17 In the interest of time, I'm going to ask the key
18 speakers for each party to introduce your entire team
19 by listing the names of the people who will be
20 participating in the proceedings this week, starting
21 with the proponent, B2Gold.

22 Roll Call

23 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
24 Keefe, B2Gold Nunavut. I will be the lead speaker for
25 B2Gold Nunavut as we discuss the Back River renewable
26 energy centre project proposal.

1 I am joined by my colleagues and technical support
2 staff which I will now introduce, and I ask each of
3 them to please kindly raise their hands when I say
4 their name. John Kaiyogana, supervisor, community
5 relations; Dennis Stansbury, senior vice president,
6 engineering, and project evaluations, a founding member
7 of B2Gold; Carly Ferizovic, manager of Indigenous and
8 northern affairs; Greg Sharam, technical director of
9 environmental resources management; Brian Edwards, a
10 director of business development with NextEra Energy;
11 and Christine Kowbel, legal counsel, Lawson Lundell.

12 Quana. Thank you.

13 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

14 Now I turn to the intervenors to introduce their
15 representatives.

16 Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

17 D. FREDLUND: Thank you. My name is Dustin
18 Fredlund. I'm the chief operating officer for Nunavut
19 Tunngavik.

20 Beside me is Gabriel Nirlungayuk, director of
21 wildlife and environment. And online, we have Arthur
22 Yuan, our legal counsel for Nunavut Tunngavik; and
23 Ronnie Suluk, senior advisor, lands use planning.

24 Quana.

25 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

26 Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

1 J. EETOOLOOK: My name is James Eetoolook,
2 vice president for community association responsible
3 for wildlife and environment.

4 I'm here with John Roesch, technical advisor; and
5 a biologist, Celia Chui. If I didn't say it right, I'm
6 sorry. We are from Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

7 Thank you very much.

8 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

9 Government of Nunavut.

10 J. BULLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is
11 Justin Buller from the Government of Nunavut. I'm
12 the Avatiliriniq coordinator.

13 With me today behind us is Jessica Waldinger. She
14 is the project manager for research and monitoring.
15 Next to me is Shaanzéh Ataullahjan, legal counsel. On
16 the phone joining us today we have Lisa-Marie Leclerc.
17 She's the regional biologist for the Kitikmeot region.
18 We have also Stephen Symes, external subject-matter
19 expertise. He's a wildlife biologist. And I think
20 joining us later today is Jonas Azonaha from economic
21 development and transportation.

22 Thank you.

23 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

24 Government of the Northwest Territories online.

25 J. HODSON: Good morning. This is James
26 Hodson from the wildlife management division of

1 Government of the Northwest Territories department of
2 environment and climate change.

3 And I'll have Jan Adamczewski joining me later
4 today closer to the time we're scheduled to present.

5 Thank you.

6 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

7 Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs
8 Canada.

9 S. DEWAR: Quana, Mr. Chair. Spencer
10 Dewar, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs
11 Canada.

12 I am supported to my left by John MacInnis, and in
13 the audience we have Lorena Gracia Zayas. We also do
14 have support in the room from the Canadian Northern
15 Economic Development Agency, the Northern Projects
16 Management Office Kaitlyn Bakker and Margaret Friesen.

17 And I will note that the Government of Canada is
18 also being supported by the Department of Justice with
19 Joseph McHattie, and we are also -- also supported by a
20 virtual presence online.

21 I'll turn it over to my colleague at Health
22 Canada.

23 Quana.

24 C. DUTCHAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25 My name is Cassidy Dutchak, and I'm an impact
26 assessment specialist for Health Canada. I am joined

1 today by my colleague Matthew Goncalves, environmental
2 assessment coordinator.

3 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

4 Transport Canada.

5 S. KIDD: Good morning, Mr. Chair. My
6 name is Scott Kidd. I'm a regional environmental
7 advisor with Transport Canada's prairie and northern
8 region, and my office is in Winnipeg.

9 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

10 In addition to the parties participating in the
11 public hearing, the Athabasca Denesuline, including the
12 Athabasca Dene Ne Ne land claims corporation and
13 representatives from the communities of Fond du Lac,
14 Black Lake, and Hatchet Lake participated in this
15 assessment providing written comments and final written
16 submissions and attending the technical meeting,
17 prehearing conference, and the community roundtable in
18 Cambridge Bay last year.

19 Unfortunately, due to scheduling conflicts, the
20 Athabasca Denesuline will not be participating in this
21 public hearing, but the comments they have provided
22 about the energy centre proposal to date will be
23 included in the public hearing record for the file for
24 the Board's consideration.

25 Before I turn things over to B2Gold, just some
26 final housekeeping matters. For those of you not

1 familiar with the hall here in Cambridge Bay, the
2 washrooms are located outside of this room in the lobby
3 area. Exits are located throughout the main door to
4 the lobby and on the side of the rooms and the front
5 and back corners.

6 Lastly, to ensure that everyone has a reasonable
7 opportunity to participate in these meetings, the Board
8 requests that everyone respect the following Board's
9 directions: It is our tradition to give respect to our
10 Elders. Therefore, we invite any Elder who are in
11 attendance to let our staff know that they wish to
12 speak. So that we can hear the comments provided, we
13 do ask that Elders wait until I say their name, and our
14 staff can get the microphone in front of them before
15 they speak.

16 It is very difficult to predict the precise time
17 requirements for the presentations and questions, and
18 as a result of the schedule, it remains somewhat
19 flexible. Consequently, the Board asks that all
20 participants bear with us as we adjust to reflect the
21 need of the participants and the Board throughout these
22 meetings.

23 To make the best use of our time, please respect
24 the timelines set out in the agenda and the time I have
25 given to set for the breaks and return promptly to the
26 proceedings. We have a lot to cover during these

1 hearings, and we cannot wait for late arrivals.

2 For all the participants, please do not interrupt
3 when a person is speaking. Please do not begin
4 speaking until I say your name as I am often waiting
5 for the interpreters to finish their work before we
6 turn to another speaker.

7 For the community representatives, as set out in
8 the agenda for the community roundtable tomorrow, there
9 will be an opportunity for you to ask questions during
10 the community roundtable and the topics included in the
11 various technical presentations during the technical
12 sessions of the hearing. Please keep track of your
13 questions and comments for the discussions during the
14 community roundtable.

15 For the sake of our interpreters and all of the
16 participants, when it is your turn to speak, please use
17 the microphone, state your name and your community or
18 who you represent, then speak clearly at a reasonable
19 pace. Also, please do not use abbreviations and
20 acronyms and be mindful that some terms may require our
21 interpreters to take time to explain in detail. So
22 please be aware of the interpreters and pause when it
23 appears they need extra time to explain what you're
24 saying.

25 The Board asks everyone joining the proceedings to
26 be patient with each other and the Board as the

1 technology we use may result in interruptions and
2 limitations that are outside of the parties' and the
3 Board's control.

4 And, finally, I would like to remind everyone that
5 the Board will not tolerate comments belittling the
6 views, comments and responses of the other
7 participants, or simply intend to disrupt the
8 proceedings. Parties that are not abiding by the
9 Board's rules and directions may be sanctioned by the
10 Board and may be barred from participating.

11 The Board recognizes that parties may have very
12 different and strong opinions about this assessment,
13 but we appreciate everyone sharing their views in a way
14 that is respectful and productive. We thank everyone
15 in advance for participating in this public hearing in
16 that spirit.

17 We will now proceed with the start of the
18 technical session and Agenda Item 4. In this part of
19 the technical session, B2Gold will deliver an overview
20 presentation of the components and activities
21 associated with the energy centre proposal.

22 We will begin with B2Gold's 45-minute
23 presentation, including the following: An
24 introduction, project overview, summary of engagement,
25 and response to final written submissions.

26 Before I turn the microphone over to B2Gold, the

1 Board's legal counsel will walk us through the
2 proceedings for the swearing in/affirming B2Gold's
3 witnesses who will be presenting and answering
4 questions on the topic and for the -- and for entering
5 the documents filed as exhibits on the public hearing
6 record.

7 Teresa.

8 Procedural Matters by Nunavut Impact Review Board Legal
9 Counsel

10 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Teresa
11 Meadows, legal counsel for the Nunavut Impact Review
12 Board.

13 For all participants, before a presentation is
14 made, whether it be the proponent or the intervenors,
15 we ask that they either swear with respect to their
16 evidence on the Bible or affirm, if you choose not to,
17 and we will administer the oath to all of the Panel
18 members who will be presenting the presentation or who
19 will be answering questions associated with that
20 presentation. If a participant does have anyone who is
21 on the audio-visual feed, we will also affirm them at
22 that same time.

23 And the hard copy presentation materials we mark
24 as exhibits, and the reason that we do that is although
25 these materials have already been filed with the Board,
26 so they are part of the public hearing record. We find

1 that for parties who are looking at the transcript
2 afterwards, it's very helpful if they know which of the
3 presentation materials are being referenced during
4 someone's presentation, and so we mark those as
5 exhibits in the public hearing so that the reference
6 can be included in the transcript, and someone can
7 follow along even if they were not present during the
8 public hearing.

9 So if I can have -- the first panel, if I can have
10 every one of the witnesses to state and spell their
11 name for the record, please.

12 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
13 Keefe, B2Gold Nunavut. M-E-R-L-E K-E-E-F-E.

14 Thank you. Quana.

15 G. SHARAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Greg
16 Sharam for ERM Canada. G-R-E-G S-H-A-R-A-M.

17 Thank you.

18 D. STANSBURY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dennis
19 Stansbury. D-E-N-N-I-S S-T-A-N-S-B-U-R-Y, B2Gold.

20 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Teresa
21 Meadows, legal counsel for the Nunavut Impact Review
22 Board.

23 Do the witnesses wish to be sworn or affirmed?

24 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
25 Keefe, B2Gold.

26 Affirmed, please.

1 MERLE KEEFE, GREG SHARAM, DENNIS STANSBURY, Affirmed

2 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

3 So I have the presentation materials, the B2Gold
4 Nunavut energy centre overview. I have it in English,
5 Inuktitut, and Inuinnaqtun, and I propose to mark those
6 as the first three exhibits in the public hearing, and
7 that concludes my procedural matters, Mr. Chair.

8 EXHIBIT 1 - Hard Copy PowerPoint

9 Presentation, B2Gold Nunavut Energy Centre,
10 Overview Presentation (English)

11 EXHIBIT 2 - Hard Copy PowerPoint

12 Presentation, B2Gold Nunavut Energy Centre,
13 Overview Presentation (Inuktitut)

14 EXHIBIT 3 - Hard Copy PowerPoint

15 Presentation, B2Gold Nunavut Energy Centre,
16 Overview Presentation (Inuinnaqtun)

17 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Teresa.

18 Now we turn it over to B2Gold who may proceed with
19 their preparation.

20 Presentation by B2Gold Corporation (B2Gold Nunavut
21 Energy Centre, Overview Presentation)

22 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
23 Keefe, B2Gold Nunavut. Ulaakut. Good morning.

24 Thank you, quana to the Nunavut Impact Review
25 Board for allowing us all to be here today and
26 throughout the week, and thank you to the mayor, Wayne

1 Gregory, for the warm welcome back to Cambridge Bay.

2 As I mentioned, my name is Merle Keefe. I'm the
3 manager of environment with B2Gold Back River Corp.
4 or -- or B2Gold Nunavut. I'll now provide a short
5 opening remark prior to my overview presentation.

6 Throughout the rest of this week, we will be here
7 to discuss a modification to the approved Back River
8 project to allow for the construction of a renewable
9 energy centre. If approved, this modification will
10 allow for the construction of up to 13 wind turbines,
11 solar panels, batteries for energy storage, and
12 ancillary infrastructure to support the construction
13 and maintenance of this energy centre.

14 The Back River project itself is located
15 approximately 400 kilometres southwest of Cambridge
16 Bay, and it includes an approved mine site, marine
17 laydown area, and a winter ice road that connects those
18 two areas.

19 The mine is currently under construction and on
20 schedule to reach first gold by the first quarter of
21 2025.

22 In April of last year, 2023, B2Gold, a
23 Vancouver-based mining company, purchased the Back
24 River project and Sabina Gold & Silver. With the
25 purchase of that project, B2Gold brings a wealth of
26 experience in construction and operation of renewable

1 energy projects.

2 At both B2Gold projects in Mali and Namibia,
3 B2Gold operates hybrid solar power plants. These
4 plants are some of the largest in Africa, and they
5 reflect B2Gold's commitment to environmental
6 stewardship and a reduction on the dependence of diesel
7 fuel in operations globally but more importantly right
8 here in Canada's arctic.

9 The proposed energy centre will see the Back River
10 project reduce carbon emissions by over 30,000 tonnes,
11 and recent engineering shows that that number could be
12 as high as 80,000 tonnes. It'll reduce our reliance on
13 diesel fuel for energy by over 50 percent, and due to
14 the reduction in the amount of diesel fuel required, it
15 will also reduce the amount of fuel truck trips that
16 are required on the winter ice road as -- as well as
17 the amount of ships required for the sealift.

18 Additionally and most importantly, if approved,
19 the project will introduce a new opportunity for B2Gold
20 to work with Kitikmeot communities, the Kitikmeot Inuit
21 Association, and Inuit-owned businesses to introduce
22 new training and employment opportunities related to
23 the construction, operation, and maintenance of the
24 energy centre.

25 As you will hear, we have been carrying out
26 community engagement and stakeholder engagement on the

1 energy since -- sector since 2019. Almost five years
2 now. In that time, we have held public in-person and
3 virtual sessions, many meetings with regulators that
4 are here with us today, as well as hamlet governments,
5 hunters and trappers organizations, and, again, the
6 Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

7 These meetings always have one goal, and that's to
8 listen and hear from our project partners, the
9 communities, and most importantly the Kitikmeot Inuit
10 to ensure the energy centre was designed in a way that
11 enhances the Back River project, lessens our
12 environmental impact, and still provides benefits and
13 opportunities for Kitikmeot Inuit.

14 I believe we have achieved that goal. We have
15 received a total of 28 information requests,
16 43 technical comments throughout the review process,
17 and I'm very pleased to say that through our collective
18 efforts to date, we have resolved all information
19 requests and technical comments to the satisfaction of
20 Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Kitikmeot Inuit
21 Association, the Government of Nunavut, and the federal
22 government departments that have participated in this
23 assessment.

24 Collaboration has always been key. It's always
25 been the approach to the Back River project, and this
26 energy centre -- this renewable energy centre

1 modification has been no different.

2 We have heard from Kitikmeot Inuit and others that
3 there were concerns about the impact of this project
4 may have on caribou, so we have made important
5 commitments and proposed changes to our already
6 industry-leading caribou protection measures.

7 This was all done through collaboration and the
8 spirit of working together, and we continue to do so.
9 As we begin our week here in Cambridge Bay, I would
10 like to thank each and every party who has worked with
11 us on this assessment, and the proposal before the
12 board would not have been possible without the
13 collaboration shown by everyone.

14 Thank you again, Mr. Chair, for the work of the
15 Nunavut Impact Review Board to bring us all together
16 here this week. We know it's not easy work for you and
17 your team and myself, and my team are looking forward
18 to this public hearing.

19 Thank you. Quana.

20 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

21 Before we get to the next agenda, we'll take a
22 15-minute break. We'll be back at 10:30. Thank you.

23 (ADJOURNMENT)

24 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

25 We'll continue on with B2Gold.

26 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you.

1 Merle Keefe, B2Gold.

2 I will now present the overview presentation. In
3 April of last year, B2Gold acquired Sabina, Sabina Gold
4 & Silver, and B2Gold are now the owners and operators
5 of the Back River project.

6 As I mentioned, B2Gold is an international senior
7 gold producer; however, their headquarters are in
8 Canada in Vancouver. They were founded in 2007, and my
9 colleague Dennis Stansbury is actually one of those
10 founding members.

11 What's most important is that -- the same
12 commitments that Sabina made. Sabina has been in the
13 Kitikmeot for a long time, and those commitments that
14 Sabina made in terms of environmental stewardship and
15 community and Inuit engagement remain the same.

16 On this screen you'll see a map which shows
17 locations or projects for B2Gold. The headquarters, as
18 I mentioned, are located in Canada in Vancouver.

19 There are three operating mines: the Fekola Mine
20 in Mali, the Otjikoto Mine in Namibia, and the Masbate
21 mine in the Philippines.

22 The Back River project, of course, is located
23 approximately 400 kilometres south of us here in
24 Cambridge Bay. Not to be confused with the headwaters
25 of the Back River, which are proximal to Gjoa Haven.

26 The NIRB -- the Nunavut Impact Review Board

1 approved the Back River project in 2017. We signed the
2 framework agreement with the Kitikmeot association --
3 Inuit Association in April of 2018, and we are
4 currently anticipating a 15-year mine life with
5 benefits to Inuit throughout the mine life, including
6 jobs and contracts with Inuit businesses.

7 We are also very proud of the strong caribou
8 protection measures that we have developed through our
9 community engagement and in partnership with the
10 Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

11 These are many of the environmental and social
12 areas that we have studied and addressed at the
13 Back River project. They range from the atmospheric to
14 the freshwater to the human to the marine and the
15 terrestrial environments.

16 And we have ongoing monitoring efforts and
17 management plans developed for these; however, we are
18 committed to continuous improvement, and that is why we
19 have decided -- one of the reasons we have decided to
20 bring forward this application to add wind and solar
21 options to the Back River project.

22 Why renewable energy? Wind and solar power are
23 proven renewable energy sources. Diavik has a wind
24 farm and is installing solar. And the Hope Bay project
25 here in the Kitikmeot includes approved wind turbines
26 in its project certificate.

1 Our studies tell us that the wind will generate
2 power for the Goose mine. It's a world-class wind
3 resource. We've been studying the wind in that
4 location for up to five years now, and it's a great
5 location to capture and generate power.

6 We have also considered traditional knowledge and
7 community feedback as well as available western
8 science, and it confirms the location is a low-use area
9 for caribou and not a primary location for hunting or
10 traditional harvesting.

11 There are many benefits, environmental benefits to
12 adding renewable energy, many of which are shown on the
13 screen: a reduction in winter ice road traffic, a
14 shorter duration for the winter ice road, and a
15 significant decrease in diesel fuel consumption as well
16 as related risks of spills to the terrestrial or marine
17 environment.

18 This slide reflects the minimum expectations about
19 carbon emissions. At minimum the project will reduce
20 carbon emissions by over 30,000 tonnes; however,
21 current engineering estimates a reduction of as much as
22 80,000 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide.

23 This timeline -- as our original timeline from the
24 application, it has shifted through working through the
25 Nunavut Impact Review Board process as well as B2Gold's
26 acquisition of Sabina. We're realistically not looking

1 at mobilization for a few years if approved.

2 How do wind turbines generate electricity? It's a
3 question we get a lot in the communities. Wind
4 turbines capture kinetic energy in surface winds and
5 convert that energy into electricity. As wind moves
6 over the turbine blades similar to an airplane wing, it
7 generates lift and spins those turbines, creating
8 kinetic energy.

9 The wind generation facility itself will have up
10 to 13 wind turbines with a power -- power capacity
11 between 4 and 4.5 megawatts each for a total power
12 capacity of approximately 55 megawatts. The hub height
13 of the turbines will range from 81 to 111 metres, and
14 they are spaced approximately 500 metres apart.

15 The solar panel array is a 200 by 400 metre pad,
16 an aggregate pad, and they may be added on top of
17 existing buildings if suitable on our project site.

18 There's also a battery energy storage system which
19 consists of batteries in sea cans. These are the same
20 batteries that are in our laptops or our cell phones.
21 And, again, these sea cans will be placed on an
22 aggregate or a -- a rock pad.

23 To transmit the power that is generated from the
24 spinning wind turbines to the batteries, there will be
25 transmission lines which will be laid directly adjacent
26 to the access roads on the tundra and covered with

1 aggregate. We will utilize existing roads at the
2 approved mine site to the greatest extent possible for
3 the energy centre.

4 A site layout figure of the Goose project area and
5 the renewable energy centre can be seen on the screen.
6 The original approved final environmental impact
7 statement included the Goose mine site and included the
8 potential development area, which is this red outline.

9 The proposed wind turbines will be located in
10 one -- in these two locations with connecting roads.
11 So, as you can see, these wind turbines are going to be
12 installed in an area directly adjacent to the existing
13 mine infrastructure and largely within the approved
14 potential development area from the original
15 environmental impact statement.

16 Through our community engagement and regulator
17 engagement since 2019 when we originally proposed this
18 Back River project energy centre, one of the comments
19 we continually heard, especially from the Nunavut
20 Impact Review Board, was to increase the visual aids or
21 infographics and to provide those in our presentation.

22 So this is one of the outcomes of those
23 conversations and those asks. What you see is an
24 aggregate road connecting the mine site to the wind
25 turbine array. Again, the wind turbines, up to 13 of
26 them, spaced approximately 500 metres apart, and that

1 spacing is designed to allow migration, bird migration
2 through the wind turbines. Transmission lines running
3 alongside of the road and covered and connecting to the
4 energy storage system within sea cans. We also have
5 posters printed and hung in the back of the room.

6 And continuing in that spirit, we also produced an
7 artistic impression of the wind turbines. Standing
8 from this location -- the first location that you can
9 see on the screen is the existing -- in the old Goose
10 exploration camp that has been around since the late
11 1980s. The second picture is from the south end of the
12 airstrip. The third picture is from closer to the
13 goose neck.

14 It is -- it is called "Goose Lake" because the
15 water body is supposed to resemble a goose. This is
16 the neck and the beak. So I -- I will sometimes refer
17 to it as the "goose neck" or the "goose beak".

18 The third picture is from the goose beak. And the
19 fourth picture is located approximately 2.2 kilometres
20 from the wind turbines on Chair Lake.

21 As you can see from standing from the existing
22 Goose exploration camp, it's quite hard to see the wind
23 turbines. The clarity is hard to see in this -- in
24 this -- on this screen. But the tips of the wind
25 turbines are just showing over the edge of the horizon.
26 Again, on the second picture, the tips of the wind

1 turbines are just extending over the horizon and the
2 background.

3 So as I mentioned earlier, this is an artist's
4 rendition to give people, reviewers, an idea of what
5 the energy centre will look like. The wind turbines,
6 of course, have not been installed. This picture is
7 taken from approximately 100 metres above ground
8 surface from a helicopter. And, in addition, there
9 will be mine infrastructure directly in front of these
10 wind turbines. And the last picture, again, is from --
11 is the closest location to the wind turbines,
12 approximately 2 kilometres away.

13 Again, in our effort to provide visual aids of the
14 energy centre, some of the key mitigation measures that
15 have been proposed, we also completed noise studies as
16 well as some height comparison infographics.

17 At the very top of the noise scale, we have
18 100 decibels, and that's a helicopter, so very noisy.
19 At approximately 70, 76 decibels, we have the Cambridge
20 Bay generators, so the generators that are here in
21 Cambridge Bay. Again, quite noisy. A windy day on the
22 tundra is between 60 and 70 decibels. A gas pickup
23 truck is between 50 and 60 decibels.

24 And at 48 decibels, from approximately 50 metres
25 away, we have the wind towers. So if you were standing
26 50 metres away from the wind turbines, it would sound

1 slightly quieter than if you were standing 10 metres
2 away from a pickup truck, a Ford F-150, for example.

3 If you were 2 kilometres away from the wind
4 turbines, the number is at 30 decibels, which is
5 essentially a whisper. It will sound like a whisper if
6 you are approximately 2 kilometres away. So they are
7 not very noisy.

8 In terms of height comparison, we have the Centre
9 Square, the tallest building in Yellowknife, and we
10 have the Cambridge Bay LORAN Tower, which I understand
11 is not still standing but was a landmark here in
12 Cambridge Bay. The wind turbines themselves will be in
13 between the Cambridge Bay LORAN Tower and the Centre
14 Square building in Yellowknife.

15 As previously mentioned, the energy centre will
16 reduce the fuel truck trips per year by approximately
17 700; it will reduce the amount of sealifts we need on
18 our project site by up to 15 percent; it will reduce
19 the fuel and greenhouse gas emissions by more than
20 50 percent.

21 Throughout our community engagement, two of the
22 key topics that arose during the assessment, both with
23 community and regulators, related to caribou and
24 related to birds. And we are very happy to report that
25 with our commitments with the Kitikmeot Inuit
26 Association, federal government participants, and the

1 Government of Nunavut, we have confirmed that the
2 technical issues that they raised are resolved, and we
3 continue to jointly work with the members of our
4 caribou technical advisory group on the protection
5 measures to be implemented for the renewable energy
6 centre.

7 We have committed to developing a migratory birds
8 protection plan. We have -- we have committed to
9 creating an appendix to the wildlife mitigation and
10 monitoring plan which will house the protection
11 measures related to wildlife, birds, and caribou as it
12 relates to the energy centre.

13 In terms of community engagement, it's something
14 that we take very seriously and are very proud of.
15 Since 2019, we've had over seven public meetings, in
16 person or virtual. We've had ten engagements to date
17 with elders groups, representatives from Bay Chimo and
18 Bathurst Inlet, hamlet representatives, and hunters and
19 trappers organizations, among others. And we have
20 ongoing engagements with regulators, the Kitikmeot
21 Inuit Association, and communities.

22 We have recently established an Inuit
23 environmental advisory committee, which is a
24 requirement of our Inuit Impact Benefit Agreement and
25 our project certificate, that consists of seven
26 Kitikmeot Inuit members, including a range of

1 demographics -- or groups -- elders, land users, youth,
2 and women.

3 In July of 2023, we had a site tour and a
4 discussion of the renewable energy centre proposal.
5 You can see the committee in the top-left picture.

6 As a result of that site tour and the discussion
7 on the energy centre proposal, the Inuit environmental
8 advisory committee issued a letter of support which was
9 submitted to the Nunavut Impact Review Board for the
10 renewable energy centre. This slide summarizes some of
11 our project benefits to date. We have 118 -- 118 Inuit
12 employees at the project as of the end of this year.
13 We have -- 465 million in project business expenditures
14 have been made with 122 million spent on
15 Kitikmeot-qualified business registries. And they are
16 going to continue to grow significantly with the mine
17 in construction.

18 In terms of the information requests and technical
19 comments we received, this slide gives you a sense of
20 where most of the information requests received came
21 from. We had a total of 28 information requests, the
22 majority from the Government of Nunavut, and my
23 understanding is that there are no information requests
24 outstanding.

25 This slide gives you a sense of where most of the
26 technical comments we received came from. We had a

1 total of 43 technical comments, mostly from the
2 Kitikmeot Inuit Association and the Crown-Indigenous
3 Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. As I reported
4 earlier, all of these information requests and
5 technical comments are now resolved with the Kitikmeot
6 Inuit Association, the Government of Nunavut, and the
7 federal family.

8 We appreciate everyone's -- we appreciate
9 everyone's willingness and dedication to meet and
10 understand each other's perspectives, and we think our
11 energy centre is better because of it. This slide
12 shows that the primary focus of most of the technical
13 comments were centered on birds, bird habitat, and
14 terrestrial wildlife and caribou.

15 Due to the large number of information requests
16 and technical comments that were received, I won't read
17 each and every one of them, but I will try to provide a
18 summary.

19 On birds and bird habitat, questions were raised
20 about mortality surveys and fog monitoring. We
21 resolved them through additional commitments to
22 complete additional surveys for fog and mortality
23 surveys above and beyond what is required within
24 Environment Canada guidelines for wind turbines in
25 Canada. So we have proposed additional surveys on top
26 of the guidelines.

1 On caribou and terrestrial wildlife, questions
2 were raised about monitoring for caribou, triggers for
3 shutdown measures, and behaviour monitoring of their
4 response. We have resolved them through working with
5 the caribou technical advisory group members and to
6 jointly agree on monitoring and mitigation measures for
7 the energy centre in advance of its construction if
8 approved.

9 On the description of the project, questions were
10 raised about meteorological towers and whether or not
11 they had or would have guy-wires, the spacing of the
12 turbines, and lighting measures.

13 We've resolved them by committing to
14 preferentially selecting unguyed towers if possible,
15 and, if not, we would mark guy-wires to increase
16 visibility for birds.

17 The spacing of the bases of the turbines are
18 approximately 500 metres apart. And to have
19 discussions with Transport Canada and the Kitikmeot
20 Inuit Association on lighting shielding that can be
21 utilized within federal legislation.

22 It's important to emphasize that we are not making
23 any changes to the permitted project, the mine, other
24 than the addition of this renewable energy centre.

25 In terms of the atmospheric environment and the
26 geotechnical, we heard comments on updated greenhouse

1 gas emissions numbers for the project with the addition
2 of the renewable energy centre, and we have committed
3 to complete and revise our greenhouse gas emission
4 numbers if the project is approved and once detailed
5 engineering is completed.

6 In terms of the geotechnical regime or
7 understanding of the foundation for the construction of
8 these wind turbines, we've made comments to the
9 Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
10 to collect and understand baseline information in
11 advance of construction, to implement monitoring
12 temperature cables for the turbines once constructed
13 and through operations, and to build that information
14 into our Back River project thermal monitoring plan.

15 We heard questions on the vegetation aspects of
16 the Back River project energy centre, and we've
17 committed to including the area -- the infrastructure
18 from this renewable energy centre within our existing
19 vegetation monitoring plan.

20 Quana, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

21 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Merle.

22 I'll give it to Teresa.

23 Procedural Matters by Nunavut Impact Review

24 Board Legal Counsel

25 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

26 So as you can see from the agenda, we're holding

1 questions to the next -- after the next presentation,
2 so if there are -- is a change to the number -- the
3 panelists for the next presentation for B2Gold, if I
4 can have those witnesses step up to the mic.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Teresa Meadows, legal
6 counsel for the Nunavut Impact Review Board.

7 So, Mr. Chair, as Mr. Sharam was already affirmed,
8 he is able to provide evidence for -- for this
9 presentation.

10 The next presentation I will be marking as
11 exhibits are B2Gold's "Nunavut Energy Centre
12 Atmospheric and Terrestrial" presentation. I have
13 those in English, Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun. And those
14 will be the next three exhibits in the public hearing.

15 And those are my procedural matters, Mr. Chair.

16 EXHIBIT 4 - Hard Copy PowerPoint

17 Presentation, B2Gold Nunavut Energy Centre,
18 Atmospheric and Terrestrial (English)

19 EXHIBIT 5 - Hard Copy PowerPoint

20 Presentation, B2Gold Nunavut Energy Centre,
21 Atmospheric and Terrestrial (Inuktitut)

22 EXHIBIT 6 - Hard Copy PowerPoint

23 Presentation, B2Gold Nunavut Energy Centre,
24 Atmospheric and Terrestrial (Inuinnaqtun)

25 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Teresa.

26 B2Gold, continue.

1 Presentation by B2Gold Corporation (B2Gold Nunavut
2 Energy Centre, Atmospheric and Terrestrial)

3 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you.

4 Merle Keefe, B2Gold.

5 In terms of the atmospheric environment and, more
6 specifically, the valued ecosystem components that were
7 studied within the atmospheric environment, the
8 original project looked at air quality, noise and
9 vibration, and climate and meteorology. I have
10 provided some pictures on the slide in front of you on
11 some of the atmospheric monitoring devices that are
12 currently set up at our project site.

13 On the left you'll see a dust monitoring device as
14 well as a passive air quality monitoring device. So
15 this will capture dust emissions from the project site
16 as well as potential passive air quality emissions such
17 as nitrogen dioxide as well as carbon dioxide.

18 On the picture on the far right, you'll see a
19 meteorological station, which is capturing atmospheric
20 environmental data such as wind speed and direction,
21 rainfall amounts, precipitation, as well as some solar
22 radiation information.

23 The proposed wind turbine area is located directly
24 adjacent to the existing Goose mine development area.
25 Some of the mitigation measures that we have for the
26 mine site and are also relevant to the modification

1 which are included in our noise abatement plan includes
2 ensuring equipment is fitted with appropriate mufflers
3 and silencers, ensuring equipment is well-maintained,
4 housing stationary sources -- noise sources in
5 buildings where feasible, and other possible general
6 noise abatement measures that can be implemented
7 on-site, including the reduction in the amount of
8 generators, the required amount of generator running
9 time on our project site due to the renewable energy
10 centre. Adding the wind turbines will reduce the
11 amount of time that the generators on our project site
12 need to be ran and the noise produced by those
13 generators.

14 I've previously described this slide. But, again,
15 wind towers relative to helicopters or the hamlet
16 generators or even pickup trucks, the wind towers
17 themselves are quieter.

18 In terms of climate change, renewable energy will
19 enable B2Gold to reduce its reliance on fuel, diesel,
20 at the approved project. This will, of course, help
21 reduce the approved project air emissions, so
22 greenhouse gas emissions, and their contributions to
23 climate change.

24 As previously mentioned, the project, the
25 renewable energy centre, will reduce our diesel
26 consumption by 10 million litres and over 30,000 tonnes

1 of carbon dioxide. And as previously mentioned, recent
2 engineering shows that these are the minimum
3 expectations and that those numbers -- those reductions
4 in numbers will be much higher.

5 I will now pass the remainder of the slides to my
6 colleague, Greg Sharam, to present on the terrestrial
7 environment.

8 Thank you. Quana.

9 G. SHARAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10 My name is Greg Sharam. I am a wildlife biologist
11 with Environmental Resources Management which is an
12 independent company that helps B2Gold with their
13 environmental monitoring. I've been conducting the
14 wildlife studies on-site now for 17 years. This
15 presentation includes the terrestrial environment which
16 is wildlife, vegetation, land forms, and soils.

17 The -- the 2017 final environmental impact
18 statement and the energy centre addendum considered the
19 six groups of wildlife on this slide. That includes
20 caribou, muskox, grizzly bear, fur bearers, migratory
21 birds, and raptors.

22 It also evaluated vegetation and special landscape
23 features. This presentation is going to focus
24 primarily on caribou and birds since those are the
25 topics that communities and intervenors focused on the
26 most in this review.

1 Starting with caribou, four herds of caribou were
2 evaluated for whether they would interact with the
3 project. The main herd that interacts with the project
4 is the Beverly, Ahiak herd.

5 There are three other herds who rarely or never
6 interact with the project and the proposed wind farm.
7 Those are the Bathurst herd, the Dolphin and Union
8 herd, and the Peary herd.

9 Starting with the Beverly and Ahiak herd, this is
10 the herd of caribou that interacts the most with the
11 existing project. In winter, they spend their time
12 dispersed on the tundra across the Northwest
13 Territories and into Nunavut. In spring, they migrate
14 northeast up to the coast. At that time some of the
15 caribou pass by the mine site, but mostly we see them
16 interacting with our winter ice road typically dozens
17 of kilometres away north of the area where the wind
18 farm will be located. That means we do not expect to
19 see them very often at the energy centre.

20 The calving range for this herd and the
21 post-calving range for this herd are both in the Queen
22 Maud Gulf Migratory Bird Sanctuary which is 250 to
23 500 kilometres away from the project site. As such,
24 there will be no interaction with calving or
25 post-calving areas for this wind farm. You can see
26 that on the map there. There's the mine site, and that

1 would be the calving and post-calving ground about 250
2 to 500 kilometres away. During the late summer and
3 fall, the Beverly and Ahiak herd are observed typically
4 infrequently and for short periods at the project site.
5 Over ten years of monitoring on-site, this means that
6 we see them once in a while typically for about a day,
7 and then they move on.

8 Moving on to the Bathurst herd. The Bathurst herd
9 is, in all seasons, west of the project site and
10 generally does not interact with the mine site where
11 the wind towers will be located.

12 The next herd is the Dolphin and Union Herd known
13 locally as "island caribou". They spend the summer on
14 Victoria Island, and they winter on the mainland. This
15 is the project location with a star. And you can see
16 that they are north of the project location.

17 The last caribou herd that we considered was the
18 Peary caribou which occur further north in the arctic
19 islands and do not overlap the project site.

20 The addendum evaluated the potential effects of
21 the energy centre on caribou. Three potential effects
22 were evaluated: habitat loss, disturbance, and
23 disruption of their movement.

24 In carrying out our evaluation, we kept in mind
25 some of the positive facts about the wind farm: that
26 the wind farm would result in less shipping,

1 approximately two less ships per year; that the wind
2 farm would result in about 30 percent less trucking on
3 the winter ice road; that the wind farm would result in
4 less fuel needed, about half the amount of fuel, and
5 resulting generator runtime; and the wind farm would
6 result in less risks of spills.

7 B2Gold applies stringent fuel management
8 practices, but every time fuel is handled, there is a
9 tiny risk of a spill. With the -- with 50 percent less
10 fuel, there is less chance of a spill.

11 To evaluate potential effects on caribou, we
12 started with Inuit IQ and traditional knowledge. I am
13 grateful for the wealth of knowledge that has been
14 shared with us by Inuit. They know this area and
15 caribou much better than we do.

16 The Back River project commissioned five separate
17 IQ and traditional knowledge projects from the
18 Kitikmeot region and the Northwest Territories.
19 Back River also has an Inuit environmental advisory
20 committee that meets regularly and discusses monitoring
21 results, mitigation, and management with an IQ lens.
22 They also conduct the site visits, as we saw in the
23 last presentation, so that they can see the site and
24 mitigation for themselves.

25 Participants are all Inuit land users with a
26 connection to the project site. They are from the

1 communities of Kugluktuk and Cambridge Bay.

2 The project has incorporated IQ and traditional
3 knowledge into each part of the mitigation hierarchy,
4 avoiding caribou areas through project design,
5 designing our mitigation and management programs, and
6 designing our reclamation programs.

7 I want to thank the Elders and land users who have
8 been so generous to share their knowledge with B2 and
9 myself. They are the experts on caribou. We have
10 learned so much from them and continue -- and look
11 forward to continuing to work together.

12 IQ studies for the project identified gathering
13 places for harvesters, which are the yellow circles on
14 this slide, and travel routes on the land, which are
15 the purple lines on this slide. You can -- you can see
16 that a lot of the travel routes converge on the hamlets
17 of Bathurst Inlet and Omingmaktok.

18 The important takeaway from this IQ map is that
19 the Back River mine, located here, including the wind
20 farm location, is located outside of any important
21 gathering places or travelling routes for harvesters.

22 IQ and traditional knowledge indicate that caribou
23 movement has historically been southwest to northeast
24 in this area. That's the purple lines on this map,
25 going this way. These are the same movement directions
26 that we are seeing today based on our monitoring using

1 telemetry collars or radio collars. These movements
2 continue to be verified by the Inuit environmental
3 advisory committee, and so we have high confidence
4 since our scientific monitoring, Inuit observations,
5 and long-term traditional knowledge all align. Again,
6 the important takeaway from this map is that the
7 project located here is outside of any important
8 movement corridors for caribou.

9 The first step in the mitigation hierarchy at
10 Back River is to avoid effects on important wildlife
11 areas, particularly for caribou. The project has --
12 has had a strong history of changing the design of the
13 project to avoid interactions with important wildlife
14 sites. There are some examples listed on this slide
15 which I would be happy to talk about later.

16 The important takeaway is that the wind farm has
17 been placed intentionally outside of any traditional
18 use or important caribou areas. This slide describes
19 some of the protection measures and monitoring for
20 caribou. To limit potential effects, the proposed
21 energy centre is located within or directly adjacent to
22 the mine site. So it is not a new area where the wind
23 farm would be located.

24 Our existing caribou monitoring programs will
25 apply to the wind farm including monitoring of caribou
26 collars, regional trail camera monitoring, behaviour

1 monitoring, and stress hormone monitoring. This
2 mitigation program includes temporary shutdowns when
3 caribou are present.

4 B2Gold is advised by the caribou technical
5 advisory group that includes the Kitikmeot Inuit
6 Association and the Government of Nunavut. B2Gold met
7 with that group and discussed the energy centre
8 application before it was submitted to the Nunavut
9 Impact Review Board. B2Gold has met with the caribou
10 technical advisory group before and after the technical
11 hearing and has developed an updated management and
12 monitoring program for the energy centre.

13 B2Gold is proud to say that we've addressed all of
14 the formal technical comments provided by the caribou
15 technical advisory group members to the NIRB.

16 B2Gold has committed to continuing to work with
17 the caribou technical advisory group to update the
18 details of the mitigation and monitoring program. We
19 look forward to a healthy discussion on these topics
20 going forward.

21 Overall, the addendum application concluded that
22 the energy centre is not predicted to cause any changes
23 to the original impact predictions for the project as
24 approved by the NIRB. This table shows the 2015 final
25 environmental impact statement for bids. Two potential
26 effects were considered residual effects: habitat loss

1 and disturbance.

2 The energy centre modification package also
3 assessed habitat loss and disturbance, but we added an
4 evaluation for disruption of movement and direct
5 mortality for birds.

6 When we talk about birds, we typically group them
7 into raptors and migratory birds because they have
8 different life histories. First, we'll talk about
9 raptors such as eagles and falcons. Most raptors in
10 this area nest on cliffs. Habitat for cliff-nesting
11 raptors at the mine site and the area planned for the
12 wind towers is limited due to the lack of cliffs.

13 The closest area that has any cliffs is the goose
14 neck pictured here on the left. You can see on the map
15 here on the right. This is not a great area for
16 raptors since the cliff steps are only about 1- to
17 2-metres tall and therefore easily accessed by nest
18 predators like wolverine and foxes. Some
19 ground-nesting raptors such as short-eared owl have
20 been observed, but they are very uncommon in this area.

21 Baseline studies for birds started with a review
22 of the IQ and traditional knowledge for important bird
23 areas. This was followed by consultation with
24 Environment Canada. They advised on the types of field
25 surveys that we should conduct. We over -- we
26 undertook those surveys, including studies designed to

1 determine the peak of migration, the time of year when
2 most birds are flying through, aerial surveys for
3 raptor nests and duck nests, and then area surveys on
4 the ground at the wind tower locations.

5 B2Gold discussed the monitoring for birds with the
6 caribou technical advisory group, and that group has
7 made several suggestions. B2Gold agreed to these
8 suggestions and conducted an extra year of surveys in
9 2023. We also changed the timing of our monitoring to
10 monitor later in the fall to capture late fall
11 migration. The results of these surveys on migratory
12 birds agreed with the traditional knowledge on the
13 project, increasing our certainty that we understand
14 the migration of birds in this area.

15 The project has several mitigations for birds.
16 First, the wind turbines are located directly within or
17 adjacent to the existing mine site. The towers have
18 been located to avoid raptor-nesting areas. Surveys
19 will be conducted for active bird nests during
20 construction so they can be avoided. And the wind
21 turbines are spaced so that birds can maneuver around
22 the wind turbines. They're spaced 500 metres apart.

23 This slide goes on to describe some of the
24 protection measures for birds. The wind towers will be
25 temporarily halted if there are periods of low, dense
26 fog during migration. This mitigation will be part of

1 the plans in place once the turbines are operating.
2 We've planned to monitor the wind towers for a period
3 of two years which is more than what is recommended by
4 Environment Canada. B2Gold has also made commitments
5 to the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, the Government of
6 Nunavut, and Environment Canada for birds. This
7 includes monitoring for fog year-round and increasing
8 the planned monitoring frequency for bird mortalities
9 during the first year of surveys. As a result of these
10 mitigations, no change is expected from the 2015 final
11 environmental impact statement.

12 This slide sets out the details of the current
13 vegetation mitigation measures. Again, no additional
14 residual effects have been identified as a result of
15 the energy centre as compared to the assessment
16 approved by the Nunavut Impact Review Board in 2017.

17 We have several comments on the terrestrial
18 environment part of the assessment. B2Gold has worked
19 hard with the caribou technical advisory group and
20 other parties to come to resolutions on these comments.
21 I think you will hear from all of these parties
22 participating in the public hearing here in Cambridge
23 Bay that their comments have been resolved and that
24 we're aligned on next steps for our monitoring and
25 mitigation programs.

26 Thank you. Quana.

1 THE CHAIR: Thank you for your
2 presentation.

3 Questions from our intervenors. Nunavut Tunngavik
4 Incorporated.

5 J. EETOOLOOK: James Eetoolook. Kitikmeot
6 Inuit Association.

7 I have a couple questions. Can I ask right now?

8 THE CHAIR: Thank you, James.

9 I'm just going to go by --

10 J. EETOOLOOK: Oh, okay.

11 THE CHAIR: -- the list I have for
12 questions. You're -- you're next after Nunavut
13 Tunngavik.

14 J. EETOOLOOK: Oh, okay.

15 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

16 Nunavut Tunngavik.

17 Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated Questions B2Gold
18 Corporation

19 G. NIRLUNGAYUK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

20 Thank you for the presentation. Maybe you have
21 spoke a little bit on it. I -- I missed it perhaps. I
22 understand the -- the -- the caribou -- you have
23 caribou in the west, you have caribou in the east,
24 caribou in the north, and caribou in the south. And we
25 all know caribou don't have any boundaries -- and --
26 with -- with changes from year to year. It's

1 different.

2 What is your -- on the wind -- wind turbines -- I
3 realize that's a few years down the road. What is
4 your -- if a -- if a -- if a caribou herd, I don't
5 know, 10, 15, maybe 20, what is your -- your stopgap, I
6 guess, for the turbines, 13 wind turbines. If you see
7 caribou within -- coming into the site, what is your
8 stopgap for the turbines or shutdown of the turbines?
9 I didn't hear that. Maybe perhaps I can explain a bit.

10 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Gabriel.

12 B2Gold.

13 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, Merle Keefe.

14 Thank you for the question. Quana. The
15 Back River project, the approved mine, has caribou
16 protection measures set up for all activities as it
17 relates to the project site, whether it's blasting or
18 reducing heavy equipment. And through communications
19 with the caribou technical advisory group, we've made
20 the same commitments to reduce those project activities
21 if caribou herds -- it doesn't matter which herd. If
22 they do approach our project site, we are ramping down
23 those activities.

24 So fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, blasting,
25 heavy equipment, we all have -- we ramp those
26 activities down when caribou herds approach our project

1 site. The same goes for the wind turbines. We have
2 multiple levels of caribou protection measures that
3 were generated for our project site. Largely those
4 were developed with the Kitikmeot Inuit Association and
5 the Government of Nunavut and the Nunavut Impact Review
6 Board process during the original effects assessment.

7 The specific protection measures that we've
8 committed to for the energy centre are in line with
9 those protection measures and are in line with noise
10 modelling that we have completed for our project site.
11 Those numbers are if groups of 25 or more caribou are
12 within 2 kilometres of the wind turbines, we ramp them
13 down -- we shut them down until the caribou have
14 migrated out of that protection zone or that buffer.

15 We monitor the caribou herds when they are
16 approaching our project site. We have traditional
17 knowledge that has been shared with us so we have a
18 good understanding of when caribou herds may be coming
19 in proximity to the mine, and that aligns with western
20 science as well as the Inuit environmental advisory
21 committee. Whenever caribou herds are approaching our
22 project site, for example during spring migration -- we
23 don't see caribou proximal to the Goose mine site. We
24 see them in greater numbers along the winter ice road.

25 However, when the herd is approaching our project
26 site, whether it's the winter ice road or the Goose

1 mine site, we are sending out what we call site
2 notifications. So we are letting operators know -- we
3 are letting employees of the mine site know we are
4 approaching the spring migration period, please be
5 vigilant, and we are refreshing what those caribou
6 protection measures are with our staff.

7 The next level is called a site alert. And if our
8 caribou observers identify caribou, then we are, again,
9 notifying site, and we are implementing those
10 agreed-upon protection measures. We are ramping down
11 those activities.

12 Quana, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

13 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

14 Nunavut Tunngavik incorporation.

15 D. FREDLUND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16 (NO ENGLISH FEED) rendition of the -- the wind
17 generators, the turbines, from a distance of
18 100 metres. It could have been renditioned from
19 anywhere, from the moon, for all we -- for our aspects.

20 In your noise modelling, was there any
21 consideration given to frequency and not just decibels?
22 The hertz level, the low -- low-frequency noise, for
23 example, that could cause -- though it may not be loud,
24 it could cause disturbance to wildlife?

25 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

26 THE CHAIR: Thank you. B2Gold.

1 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you.

2 Merle Keefe.

3 And thank you for the question. I'm going to pass
4 it to my colleague, Greg Sharam, to answer. Thank you.

5 G. SHARAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6 That's a good question. We actually completed two
7 models for the project, a first model which was just
8 total sound, so across different types of frequencies.
9 And then through discussion with the caribou technical
10 advisory group, there was essentially that same
11 question which was, Do caribou hear better in some
12 ranges, and, Can we model those ranges separately?

13 So a second model was completed, which -- which
14 models separately for different "octave bands", they're
15 called, so we model separately for low frequency, mid
16 frequency, high frequency, so we can compare that to
17 the hearing range of caribou.

18 Thank you.

19 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Greg.

20 Nunavut Tunngavik.

21 D. FREDLUND: Thank you for the -- thank
22 you, Mr. Chair.

23 So what was the -- the result of that modelling?
24 In our written submission, we identify this survey done
25 over in Scandinavia and the effects of Rangifer
26 tarandus -- tarandus which is a subspecies of caribou.

1 It's all the same.

2 In that study it showed that caribou --
3 reindeer -- caribou were affected by the low-frequency
4 noise of the turbines. So in your modelling that you
5 did in -- with your -- working with your terrestrial or
6 the -- the wildlife group, what was the result of that?

7 Quana.

8 THE CHAIR: Thank you for your question.

9 Before your question, can you state your name.

10 Thank you.

11 D. FREDLUND: Post -- post-question, my name
12 is Dustin Fredlund, NTI. Thank you.

13 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

14 B2Gold.

15 M. KEEFFE: Mr. Chair, thank you.

16 Merle Keefe, B2Gold.

17 I'm going to again ask my colleague, Greg Sharam,
18 to answer the question. Thank you.

19 G. SHARAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

20 Greg Sharam from ERM.

21 It's a good question. The typical way that noise
22 is modelled is for the -- the hearing range of people,
23 which is known as decibel-weighted 'A' or "dBA".

24 Caribou research indicates -- hears better than
25 people in the low-frequency band, and so our modelling
26 compared the hearing range of caribou in that

1 low-frequency band to the noise that the wind turbine
2 would make, and then we add in background noise, wind
3 noise, to determine if caribou can hear that wind tower
4 over the -- the background wind noise, and that would
5 occur at about 2 kilometres away from the wind towers.

6 Thank you.

7 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

8 Nunavut Tunngavik.

9 D. FREDLUND: Quana, Ihivautaq.

10 Dustin Fredlund again with NTI, Nunavut Tunngavik.

11 Thank you for your response. I would have been
12 interested to see the -- the caribou that were used for
13 the -- the hearing modelling, but, obviously, we'll
14 take -- we'll take your word and the word of the group
15 that you worked with on this.

16 Just for the record, I'd like to point out that
17 a -- a grave concern that we have is -- is
18 the low-frequency noise and the impact it will have on
19 caribou. We didn't consider wind direction. Wind
20 should carry sound far. So this is in a stagnant
21 environment where there is no wind. I assume that your
22 research was done with no wind even though wind may
23 have been included in the modelling. But wind carries
24 sound great distances. Sound carries farther in the
25 wintertime. So, I mean, these are things that I think
26 that should be considered when you're developing the --

1 further developing this project.

2 Quana, Ihivautaq.

3 THE CHAIR: Thank you. I didn't hear a
4 question about that.

5 Before we go on to the next intervenor, Kitikmeot
6 Inuit Association, we'll take a break for lunch. Be
7 back at 1:15. Thank you.

8 (PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED UNTIL 1:15 PM)

9 (PROCEEDINGS RECOMMENCED AT 1:16 PM)

10 THE CHAIR: Welcome back, everybody. Just
11 a reminder to sign back in when you come back.

12 This morning before the break we had questions
13 from NTI to B2Gold. Next up is we have Kitikmeot Inuit
14 Association.

15 Kitikmeot Inuit Association Questions B2Gold
16 Corporation

17 J. EETOOLOOK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My name
18 is James Eetoolook, Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

19 I have a couple of questions. The first one
20 regarding the windmill, the noise pollution. I don't
21 know if you call it "noise pollution".

22 Did you guys ever study the -- in wintertime -- in
23 wintertime when the weather gets really cold, the sound
24 travels much shorter than normal. So by how much it
25 travels further? That's one question.

26 And according to the -- the maps, how the caribou

1 travel and for this day in wintertime, and they migrate
2 up north to born their young ones. On this map, the
3 herd that we get at Ahiak goes up to -- towards the
4 east Boothia Peninsula. That's where they born their
5 young ones. Why is it not on this map?

6 And what else? We'll see. That's it for now.

7 Thank you.

8 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

9 B2Gold.

10 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
11 Keefe, B2Gold.

12 I'm going to pass the answers to my colleague,
13 Greg Sharam. Thank you.

14 G. SHARAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Greg
15 Sharam from ERM.

16 To answer the first question about noise and the
17 winter, when we do any form of noise modelling, we use
18 the worst-case scenario, so the scenario where noise
19 would travel the furthest. So we always model it in
20 the winter when noise would travel farther.

21 But for our monitoring programs, we monitor both
22 in the -- in the winter and in the summer so we can see
23 the difference in -- in the actual noise made by the
24 project, both before the wind towers would go in, so
25 we're doing that this year, and after the wind towers.
26 We'd go in and we'd measure in the winter and in the

1 summer. I hope that answers your first question.

2 The second question was about maps of the Ahiak
3 range, and I think there are -- are several different
4 maps which show the calving range of the Beverly Ahiak
5 range. We've taken our maps from the Nunavut Planning
6 Commission, and that was data that they got from the
7 Government of Nunavut to show the -- the distribution
8 of that calving range. So -- but I understand there
9 are some slightly different maps out there.

10 Thank you. Thank you.

11 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

12 Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

13 J. EETOOLOOK: James Eetoolook, Kitikmeot
14 Inuit Association.

15 You know, for a project like you said, how is
16 it that the -- what's -- what's the reason -- maybe you
17 can answer that -- why not the part of the herd go born
18 their young ones in Boothia Peninsula? I think that
19 should be included in -- in the -- in the maps since
20 it's part of Ahiak region anyways, so ...

21 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

22 B2Gold.

23 M. KEEFE: Merle Keefe. Thank you for
24 your question. B2Gold.

25 I'm going to pass the answer to my colleague, Greg
26 Sharam.

1 G. SHARAM: Greg Sharam from ERM.

2 It's a good question, and it's an existing
3 commitment within the monitoring program for wildlife,
4 is to map the distribution of the collaring -- or of
5 the calving areas and post-calving areas and present
6 those in the annual reports. So coming up in the
7 annual reports, there will be maps showing where those
8 collard caribou are -- are calving.

9 Thank you.

10 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

11 Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

12 J. EETOOLOOK: James Eetoolook, Kitikmeot
13 Inuit Association.

14 Another thing, the collaring, how is it being --
15 being -- still being used in order to monitor the --
16 the caribou movement? In the Inuit knowledge, you
17 know, we've been wanting to see -- do away with the
18 collaring programs and go with the less invasive
19 methods to -- to have the caribou let -- not my
20 question, but just a comment.

21 Thank you.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

23 Next we have Government of Nunavut.

24 Government of Nunavut Questions B2Gold Corporation

25 J. BULLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Justin
26 Buller from the Government of Nunavut.

1 here for the Government of the Northwest Territories.

2 We don't have any questions at this time. Thank
3 you.

4 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

5 Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs
6 Canada.

7 S. DEWAR: Quana, Mr. Chair. Spencer
8 Dewar.

9 On behalf of the Government of Canada, we have one
10 question. It'll be asked by our colleague Russell
11 Wykes from Environment and Climate Change Canada.
12 Environment and Climate Change Canada Questions B2Gold
13 Corporation

14 R. WYKES: Hello, everybody. Russell
15 Wykes, Environment and Climate Change Canada.

16 I just have one question. The presentation noted
17 that an 81- to 111-metre turbine hub height was given.
18 The infographic seemed to present an 111-metre turbine
19 height hub -- hub height. Environment and Climate
20 Change Canada is wondering if B2Gold has selected the
21 111-metre hub height turbine or if that is still to be
22 determined and whether -- or whether the hub height
23 will be a -- hub height will be determined by the most
24 environmentally sound or the most available,
25 understanding the logistics of -- of getting the
26 different sizes of turbines up there.

1 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

2 B2Gold.

3 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
4 Keefe, B2Gold.

5 And thank you, Environment Canada, for your
6 question. I think there were a couple parts to that
7 question, and I'll try to address them.

8 In terms of the range from 81 to 111 metres, the
9 final turbine model has not been selected. The
10 infographics show the 111-metre version again showing
11 and depicting the largest version. However, detailed
12 engineering is necessary to be completed prior to
13 selecting the wind turbine model.

14 As discussed during the October prehearing
15 conference, B2Gold has made several commitments. Once
16 detailed engineering is completed and a model is
17 selected within that range, we have committed, for
18 example, with the Kitikmeot Inuit Association to
19 redoing and reanalyzing impacts to birds, if the wind
20 turbines and the blade are closer. So whichever model
21 we choose, we will redo the modelling and the studies.

22 We have also made a commitment to redo the
23 greenhouse gas emissions numbers once final engineering
24 is complete, and in terms of the decision on how we
25 will select that model, we will look at various factors
26 through that detailed engineering process. We will

1 review the commitments that we made from an
2 environmental perspective, but we will also include the
3 other metrics which you mentioned.

4 So logistics, transportation, and the economic
5 impacts and the ability for the wind turbines to
6 harness the wind turbine or the wind resource to its
7 greatest potential and reduce the amount of diesel
8 emissions on the project.

9 Thank you. Quana.

10 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

11 Did you have a follow-up question?

12 R. WYKES: Russell Wykes, Environment and
13 Climate Change Canada.

14 No. That's a -- that's a great response to my
15 question. Thank you for that answer. No further
16 questions.

17 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

18 Health Canada.

19 C. DUTCHAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Cassidy
20 Dutchak, Health Canada.

21 No questions.

22 THE CHAIR: Transport Canada.

23 S. KIDD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Scott
24 Kidd, Transport Canada.

25 I have no questions.

26 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

1 Nunavut Impact Review Board staff. Thank you.

2 Nunavut Impact Review Board Staff Questions B2Gold
3 Corporation

4 T. ARKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tara
5 Arko, Nunavut Impact Review Board staff. We do have a
6 couple questions for the proponent here.

7 The first related to scope. Are the 13
8 turbines -- the maximum 13 turbines proposed planned to
9 be built at once, or will there be time between
10 construction to allow for monitoring information to be
11 collected?

12 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

13 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
14 Keefe, B2Gold.

15 The construction of the 13 turbines will occur
16 within the same period, the same timeline. So they
17 will all go up at once is the current plan.

18 Thank you.

19 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board
20 staff.

21 T. ARKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tara
22 Arko, Nunavut Impact Review Board staff.

23 The caribou technical advisory group is a specific
24 group to review parts of the project. How does B2Gold
25 consider traditional knowledge, Inuit
26 Qaujimagatuqangit, and community knowledge in

1 management and monitoring? Sorry. I should add beyond
2 what the 'C' -- the caribou technical advisory group is
3 expected to look at.

4 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

5 M. KEEFE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Merle
6 Keefe, B2Gold.

7 We considered traditional knowledge from several
8 sources in both instances -- or in all instances to
9 identify potential interactions for local wildlife and
10 land-use considerations in addition to other potential
11 areas of concern. There were two reports produced and
12 shared with B2Gold by the Kitikmeot Inuit Association,
13 the Naonaiyaotit traditional knowledge project.

14 We've had meetings and workshops between Sabina
15 and now B2Gold with Inuit land users and hunters and
16 trappers organizations and a very comprehensive
17 community engagement program over the last -- a dozen
18 years.

19 We also accessed publicly available traditional
20 knowledge from selected Indigenous groups within the
21 Northwest Territories. In addition to the above
22 information, we also continued to collect with ongoing
23 community engagement feedback and traditional knowledge
24 for the project. So it doesn't just stop with the
25 traditional knowledge reports that had been shared with
26 us.

1 In addition, we have the Inuit environmental
2 advisory committee, which is a requirement that was
3 established as part of the Inuit Impact Benefit
4 Agreement but also the project certificate from the
5 Nunavut Impact Review Board. And, as I mentioned,
6 that's a group of land users familiar with the back of
7 a project site that have been brought to our sites. We
8 put their boots on the ground and show them the actual
9 environmental management system that we have in place,
10 and we get their feedback.

11 In 2024, the Inuit environmental advisory
12 committee is going to be focusing on water quality
13 monitoring, for example, and we plan to bring them
14 and -- and have them participate in that water quality
15 monitoring.

16 So far the observations of the Inuit environmental
17 advisory committee have aligned with those traditional
18 knowledge reports that were collected during the
19 original EA and -- which also align with western
20 science.

21 So hopefully that provides an explanation of not
22 just the traditional knowledge reports that were shared
23 with us during the effects assessment but also the
24 other sources that we continue to collect as well as
25 the feedback that we gain from the Inuit environmental
26 advisory committee.

1 Thank you.

2 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

3 Nunavut Impact Review Board staff.

4 T. ARKO: Tara Arko, Nunavut Impact
5 Review Board staff.

6 Thank you for that answer, Merle. And it kind of
7 got, actually, a lot of the response to my next
8 question already handled, is how are the updates from
9 your project mitigation monitoring shared back to the
10 advisory groups and the community members?

11 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

12 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
13 Keefe, B2Gold.

14 We have extensive annual report requirements
15 through the Nunavut Impact Review Board where we report
16 on the terms and conditions that are within the Back
17 River project -- terms -- terms and conditions within
18 the Back River project project certificate. The
19 results of that annual monitoring as well as project
20 update presentations are provided within our community
21 engagement programs where we're annually going into the
22 Kitikmeot communities, and we're presenting on where
23 Back River is, providing a Back River project update,
24 but we're also discussing the results of our annual
25 report, the terms and conditions for the requirements
26 of the project.

1 In addition to that and what I had previously
2 mentioned, we have the Inuit environmental advisory
3 committee, again, where we are bringing Inuit of
4 varying demographics, land users, women, Elders. We're
5 bringing them to our project, and we're allowing them
6 to participate in and -- and, in some cases, lead the
7 environmental management system that we have on our
8 project, and we're getting their feedback from them and
9 using that feedback to improve the environmental
10 management system that we have on our project site.

11 Thank you. Quana.

12 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

13 Nunavut Impact Review Board staff.

14 T. ARKO: Tara Arko, Nunavut Impact
15 Review Board staff.

16 Noting the size of some of the equipment being
17 discussed -- and some parts of the equipment would
18 still be very long as it was transported to site -- how
19 has this been considered and accounted for in both the
20 winter road design or managing impacts from transport
21 to site over the winter road?

22 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

23 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
24 Keefe, B2Gold.

25 Thank you for that question. That's a great
26 question. We've done a detailed review of the

1 logistical requirements for both the sealift and the
2 winter ice road for the delivery of the wind turbines
3 and the blades to the project. Trailers designed
4 specifically for the length of the loads will be
5 provided. However, it is quite possible to move the
6 turbines and the blades down the winter ice road.

7 We've brought NextEra, who is the proposed
8 supplier of the wind turbines, to our project site, and
9 they have completed a review of the winter ice road,
10 the -- and the equipment that we have on our project
11 site, and feel very confident that the success -- the
12 logistical success, the transportation of those wind
13 turbines to our project site, is very possible.

14 NextEra is one of the largest companies in the
15 world for the installation of wind power, over
16 10,000 turbines globally, and they have extensive
17 experience with engineering, design, and logistics for
18 constructions of a wind farm, and we feel very
19 confident jointly that the logistics can be completed
20 successfully.

21 Thank you.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

23 Nunavut Impact Review Board staff.

24 T. ARKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tara
25 Arko, Nunavut Impact Review Board staff.

26 Switching back over to the caribou topic. In

1 planning mitigation, how has B2Gold accounted for the
2 sensitivity of the caribou herds when they are most
3 likely to interact with the energy centre components in
4 their analysis?

5 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

6 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you.

7 The caribou protection measures that we've
8 developed for the Back River project have been applied
9 to the Back River project energy centre. Whenever
10 caribou approach our project site -- and we have a good
11 understanding of when caribou approach our project site
12 based on the traditional knowledge that has been shared
13 with us as well as western science, collar data being
14 one of those forms, and we typically see caribou
15 approaching our project site during spring migration.
16 Historically, that migration route is located far away
17 from where these wind turbines will be constructed, so
18 north of the turbines and along the winter ice road.

19 We have created protection measures for when
20 caribou approach that winter ice road. So we are
21 ramping down the trucking activities that are occurring
22 on that winter ice road. There are actually some
23 posters at the back of the room which show those
24 mitigation measures being successfully applied in
25 trucks stopping.

26 In terms of more sensitive seasons for caribou

1 such as calving or post-calving, again, those locations
2 are not proximal to the Back River project or the wind
3 turbines. However, we have made commitments to shut
4 down activities, wind turbines included, if those
5 calving or post-calving ranges start to shift and move
6 towards our project site.

7 So we have what's called a "rapid operational
8 shutdown". If the calving range shifts towards our
9 project site, we are implementing the rapid operational
10 shutdown, turbines included, and we have one further
11 step after that called a "planned operational
12 shutdown". So in -- in the year the calving range may
13 shift towards the project site, we rapidly shut down.
14 The following year, we create -- or we implement the
15 planned operational shutdown during those same
16 sensitive periods.

17 I will point out that the calving range or the
18 post-calving ranges historically have never shifted in
19 large distance -- distances quickly. The calving
20 ranges have shifted. However, that doesn't happen
21 within one season or from one year to the next.
22 Regardless, if it does happen, we have protection
23 measures in place to make sure we're ramping down the
24 activities and not creating an impact during those
25 sensitive periods.

26 Thank you. Quana.

1 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board
2 staff.

3 T. ARKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Two
4 more questions. Tara Arko, Nunavut Impact Review Board
5 staff.

6 What is the furthest distance from the wind
7 turbines that B2Gold could reliably see caribou group
8 sizes, and does this allow for behaviour monitoring to
9 occur? So really looking at the limitations of direct
10 observation at site to pick up on herds in the distance
11 and what -- where would that allow for potential
12 behaviour monitoring to occur?

13 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

14 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

15 M. KEEFFE: Merle Keefe. Thank you,
16 Mr. Chair.

17 4 to 5 kilometres is what can be seen reliably
18 from height of land in advance of activities occurring,
19 environmental monitors on-site currently, transit
20 through the project area to the areas of -- of -- I
21 would say the highest topography within the Back River
22 project, and do that monitoring visually for inspecting
23 caribou.

24 We are also continuing the conversations around
25 additional monitoring techniques such as military-grade
26 cameras. Those conversations are early, but we are

1 looking at capabilities to utilize cameras with
2 software programs that have the ability to aid our
3 visual base monitoring.

4 Thank you.

5 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board
6 staff.

7 T. ARKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tara
8 Arko, Nunavut Impact Review Board staff. Last
9 question.

10 Will the transmission lines or any part of the
11 ground connection between these pieces be covered with
12 aggregate? If so, what kind of aggregate? And we are
13 trying to understand where the aggregate could cause
14 concerns for, you know, animals crossing sharp objects
15 with their hooves and/or reinforcement of the
16 infrastructure from chewing and gnawing as a lot of
17 animals on the tundra like to chew and gnaw on things.
18 So if you could just go into if those would be covered
19 and, if so, by what.

20 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
21 Keefe, B2Gold.

22 So the first part of the answer is that the
23 transmission lines will be covered by aggregate. In
24 terms of the type of aggregate material that you will
25 use to cover it, the process is to first layer -- put a
26 base layer down of larger rock, let's say 6-inch plus.

1 That -- that -- that creates your foundation. So that
2 would be the first layer of rock on your transmission
3 lines.

4 Then you're continually adding smaller-size rock
5 to fill in those gaps, but you have the larger rock
6 underneath which provides that base. So at the end,
7 you are going to have what's called a "crush material",
8 so approximately an inch, and that's a finishing layer
9 that will be placed on top of that larger material,
10 and -- and it fills in those holes and creates a
11 compact structure which will mitigate any potential
12 impacts to hooves or -- or ankles rolling, et cetera.

13 That's the same technique that would be used on
14 roads within the project site because you're not -- you
15 do not want those large, sharp rocks impacting your
16 equipment or popping tires, for example.

17 There is also a commitment made during the
18 original effects assessment I want to note, which is to
19 use the Inuit environmental advisory committee to come
20 to our project site and identify crossing locations,
21 potential crossing locations within roads for caribou.
22 So to your point.

23 So the Inuit environmental advisory committee will
24 actually look at this road and the covering of the
25 lines that we have in place and identify areas to
26 facilitate caribou crossing in addition to the measures

1 I have -- I have already spoken about.

2 Thank you.

3 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

4 Nunavut Impact Review Board staff.

5 T. ARKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6 That's all from staff at this point.

7 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

8 Nunavut Impact Review Board, Guy.

9 Nunavut Impact Review Board Panel Questions B2Gold
10 Corporation

11 G. ALIKUT: Yes. Thank you.

12 I have two questions -- I have two comments. My
13 first question is with regards to the windmills.
14 There's going to be birds that are going to be flying
15 back and forth in and throughout the windmills. What
16 type of mitigative measures are you going to put in
17 place? The ravens like to nest around March to April
18 and throughout the summer.

19 There's going to be other raptors like the
20 Peregrine falcons and the -- and the other falcons that
21 like to nest on anything that's high. So what type of
22 preventative measures are you going to put in place so
23 that the birds don't nest on -- on these -- on these
24 windmills?

25 That's my -- I'm -- I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I
26 didn't mention my name. My name is Guy Alikut. I have

1 another question after I get an answer from B2Gold.

2 Thank you.

3 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

4 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
5 Keefe, B2Gold.

6 And thank you for your question. In terms of
7 nests and nesting, we complete and we have requirements
8 within our wildlife management plan to complete nesting
9 surveys in advance of construction. So in transects,
10 we're -- we're scanning the area during nesting periods
11 or seasons, and we're identifying nests. That's in
12 advance of construction.

13 Once the turbines are constructed and operating,
14 you asked whether or not nests would be -- whether or
15 not there was -- has been evidence or shown to nest on
16 the turbines. We've -- in all of our research,
17 including turbines in the south, it's been shown that
18 turbines are not a preferred area to nest. They're
19 actually quite high relative to the cliffs that they
20 typically like to nest on, and the infrastructure
21 itself, the turbine, is -- is metal, and it's smooth,
22 and there aren't a lot of areas on top of the turbine
23 hub for a nest to be created. And -- and due to that
24 big, metal, slippery structure, it's not -- it's not
25 been shown as an area that raptors particularly like to
26 nest.

1 In terms of birds flying around during the
2 turbines operating, we've proposed shutdown measures
3 during migration periods in foggy conditions. So if it
4 is a migratory bird season and the conditions become
5 foggy and visibility is less, then we have committed to
6 shutting down the wind turbines.

7 Thank you. Quana.

8 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board,
9 Guy.

10 G. ALIKUT: Guy Alikut, NIRB board member.

11 Thank you for that answer. My second question
12 is -- I'm going to speak a little bit about -- or --
13 or -- or the question that James Eetoolook was asking,
14 IQ should be -- IQ should be used more throughout
15 Nunavut irregardless of the type of projects that are
16 being -- irregardless of the type of projects that are
17 being done up north, and IQ should be implemented
18 especially to caribou. It's just more of a comment of
19 what Eetoolook was saying. IQ should be more -- more
20 used especially during caribou migration and the times
21 where caribou are -- are calving.

22 Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

24 Nunavut Impact Review Board, Catherine.

25 C. EMRICK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

26 Catherine Emrick, Nunavut Impact Review Board

1 member.

2 So I just have a question about the caribou
3 technical advisory group and the Inuit environmental
4 advisory committee, and I'm just wondering if you could
5 talk a little bit about how the information that's
6 presented in the discussion and the recommendations
7 that might come out of each of those groups. How is --
8 is it, and, if so, how is that information shared
9 between the two groups?

10 Thank you.

11 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

12 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
13 Keefe, B2Gold Nunavut.

14 Just quickly before I -- before I get to that
15 answer, I wanted to touch base just on the -- on the
16 importance of traditional knowledge and -- and into
17 James' original question about Boothia, the peninsula,
18 and including that on maps going forward. And I just
19 wanted to confirm that we -- that is something that we
20 can do, and that's something that we'll do going
21 forward with annual reporting. So I just wanted to
22 clarify that first.

23 In terms of the caribou technical advisory group
24 and the Inuit environmental advisory committee and the
25 sharing of information, we've actually only completed
26 our first formal trip to site with the environmental

1 advisory committee in 2023.

2 The -- taking that information from the Inuit
3 environmental advisory committee and providing it
4 directly to the caribou technical advisory group is
5 something that I think we could do going forward. I'll
6 look to my members within the caribou technical
7 advisory group to comment or -- or confirm.

8 But, typically, the caribou technical advisory
9 group starts with a presentation from the proponent,
10 us, B2Gold, depending on what we're talking about. For
11 example, in May we're talking about the winter ice
12 road, and in this past February, the caribou technical
13 advisory group, we focused on the energy centre.

14 If the information within that particular caribou
15 technical advisory group is specific to observations
16 from the Inuit environmental advisory committee, B2Gold
17 could absolutely incorporate that information into the
18 presentation that we provide at the start of the
19 caribou technical advisory group meetings, and we could
20 discuss that with the caribou technical advisory group.

21 I think I'll stop there. Thank you.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

23 Nunavut Impact Review Board, Catherine.

24 C. EMRICK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25 Catherine Emrick, Nunavut Impact Review Board member.

26 Thank you for that response. But thinking also

1 about the information going the other way, so the
2 information discussed at the caribou technical advisory
3 group and their sort of discussion and recommendations,
4 does that flow back to the Inuit environmental advisory
5 committee?

6 Thank you.

7 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
8 Keefe, B2Gold.

9 If the -- the -- the environmental -- Inuit
10 environmental advisory committee has been focused on
11 one specific area within our environmental management
12 system. So, for example, in 2024, we will be focused
13 on water quality monitoring, or at least that has been
14 what has been discussed for 2024.

15 If that information is applicable to what the
16 caribou technical advisory group is discussing and the
17 Kitikmeot Inuit Association participates in both the
18 Inuit environmental advisory committee as well as the
19 caribou technical advisory group, then that information
20 could be discussed within both groups, and a summary of
21 the results could be provided.

22 Again, if -- if it's -- if the area or the subject
23 area that we are discussing is applicable, then a
24 hundred percent it -- it makes sense to transfer that
25 information and have that discussion. Again, the Inuit
26 environmental advisory committee is -- is not purely

1 focused on caribou. We certainly have discussed
2 caribou, and that information could get sent back, but
3 it isn't just pertaining to the matters that is
4 discussed at the caribou technical advisory group.

5 Thank you.

6 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board,
7 Catherine.

8 C. EMRICK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
9 Catherine Emrick, Nunavut Impact Review Board. Just
10 one more follow-up.

11 Could you just explain to me how the hunters and
12 trappers organizations are linked in with the various
13 advisory committees.

14 Thank you.

15 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

16 M. KEEFE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Merle
17 Keefe, B2Gold.

18 The selection process for the Inuit environmental
19 advisory committee chooses land users applicable -- or
20 land users familiar with the Back River project, and
21 those appointments are jointly made between B2Gold and
22 the Kitikmeot Inuit Association. I believe there are
23 hunters and trappers organization members on our Inuit
24 environmental advisory committee. If you would like
25 specifics or numbers, I can commit to getting that
26 information back to you.

1 In addition to that, we -- in our community
2 engagement, we meet with hunters and trappers
3 organizations, so outside of the committees -- or the
4 Inuit environmental advisory committee, and we're going
5 in and we're providing a project update, and we're
6 getting their feedback and incorporating that feedback
7 into our management plans going forward.

8 Quana. Thank you.

9 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board,
10 Catherine.

11 C. EMRICK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12 And thank you very much for those responses. It's
13 appreciated.

14 I just have one more very sort of specific
15 question. I'm just wondering if you can tell me,
16 roughly, with the battery energy storage system, how
17 many days of storage would you have? Just out of
18 curiosity.

19 Thank you.

20 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

21 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
22 Keefe, B2Gold.

23 The -- several hours is the answer in short. If
24 the wind turbines are producing power, the wind is
25 blowing, and those batteries are charging and then the
26 wind stops and the turbines stop, there is several

1 hours worth of batteries -- energy stored within those
2 batteries to power the mine.

3 Thank you. Quana.

4 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

5 Nunavut Impact Review Board, Catherine.

6 C. EMRICK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

7 Catherine Emrick, Nunavut Impact Review Board.

8 No more questions.

9 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board,
10 Phillip.

11 P. OMINGMAKYOK: Thank you, Ihivautaq.

12 We've heard earlier this morning about the noise
13 from the turbines. My question -- I have -- I have a
14 question regarding the noise. I'm just wondering as to
15 whether those studies are carried out in terms of a
16 timing of the season, the type of the day, and whether
17 it's cloudy or not. Inuit that have lived up here in
18 the north a long time, they know that sound carries
19 very, very far when it's -- when it's very calm, all
20 over the place, and that sound travels a long ways.

21 And my other -- other part of my question is
22 whether those -- the noise from the turbines is even
23 during the type of the winter because in the -- in the
24 cloudy days and clear days, there is very, very big
25 difference, and clear days, the sound tends to travel
26 very far.

1 Quana, Ihivautaq.

2 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

3 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
4 Keefe, B2Gold.

5 Thank you for your question. I think there were
6 several questions in there. I'm -- I'm going to try to
7 answer them. If I missed one, please do let me know.

8 So in terms of the weather and the seasonality of
9 when the noise modelling was completed, it was done
10 during the -- the winter during the period where, as
11 you mentioned, it is the highest transmission of noise.
12 So during the winter, colder air noise travels farther.
13 That is when the -- that is the -- the -- how we
14 completed the noise modelling, so the worst-case
15 scenario.

16 And I just want to touch on -- when we speak about
17 noise -- and -- and we understand it is central to
18 mitigation measures for this project in -- in
19 mitigating potential effects -- we believe that the
20 addition of these wind turbines will actually reduce
21 the amount of noise generated from the Back River
22 project, and that's because it will allow us to turn
23 the generators off.

24 And as I showed earlier in my presentation -- the
25 overview presentation, generators are quite a bit
26 noisier than wind turbines. And by utilizing these

1 wind turbines and reducing or turning off the wind --
2 the generators, we will actually reduce the amount of
3 noise that the project is going to generate.

4 I hope I answered all parts of your question.
5 Again, if I missed one, please let me know.

6 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

7 Nunavut Impact Review Board, Phillip.

8 P. OMINGMAKYOK: Quana, Ihivautaq. NIRB board
9 member, Phillip Kadlun.

10 That's all I have. Thank you.

11 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board,
12 Henry.

13 H. OHOKANNOAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

14 First, the question I was going to raise, it's --
15 it's already questioned -- it's already answered.
16 However, I have one question regarding the -- the
17 caribou advisory committee. Who are they from and --
18 where -- and where are they from and what
19 organization -- what organization -- are they -- are
20 they representing other organizations too that are
21 sitting with, or are they coming from various
22 communities, the -- the caribou technical advisory
23 group as well for the environmental advisory group --
24 environmental advisory group -- the advisory --
25 environmental advisory group?

26 And I just wanted to find out who -- because, of

1 course, people all in the community may want to know
2 who they are, so those are my questions. So where are
3 these -- are -- these committees for environmental
4 advisory group and for caribou advisory group, what
5 community -- where are they -- who are they -- are they
6 coming from the local community levels or from
7 different organizations?

8 Thank you.

9 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

10 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
11 Keefe, B2Gold.

12 I'll speak about both groups, the caribou
13 technical advisory group first and then the Inuit
14 environmental advisory committee second.

15 The caribou technical advisory group is actually a
16 requirement of our Nunavut Impact Review Board project
17 certificate, and it's focused on Inuit and the
18 Government of Nunavut participation. That was a
19 requirement that was discussed and agreed upon during
20 the original -- the mine Back River project
21 environmental assessment.

22 The focus of the group is on the local Kitikmeot
23 Inuit Association, who are the landowners and are
24 heavily involved in the project, and the Government of
25 Nunavut as the territorial government and the
26 responsible party for caribou within Nunavut.

1 The caribou technical advisory group was proposed
2 by the Kitikmeot Inuit Association and the Government
3 of Nunavut to be a small technical group that would
4 meet frequently and work collaboratively to conduct
5 technical reviews of monitoring data and mitigation for
6 the project.

7 So the caribou technical advisory group is a small
8 group, highly technical, and consists of the Kitikmeot
9 Inuit Association, the Government of Nunavut, and
10 caribou biologists. The Inuit environmental advisory
11 committee is a requirement of the Kitikmeot Inuit
12 Association Inuit Impact Benefit Agreement, and it's
13 focused on Inuit participation.

14 It does not include external parties such as the
15 Government of Nunavut, for example. It is -- it
16 consists of members of land users, and -- and it is
17 supposed to try to get a wide array of demographics.
18 So we want to have youth there. We want to have women
19 there. We want to have land users there. They consist
20 of community members that are familiar with the
21 project, familiar with the location, and have used it
22 in the past. The members are selected jointly by the
23 Kitikmeot Inuit Association and B2Gold.

24 So to recap, the Inuit environmental advisory
25 committee is just Inuit across a wide range of
26 demographics, youth, Elders, et cetera, whereas the

1 caribou technical advisory group consists of the
2 Kitikmeot Inuit Association and the Government of
3 Nunavut and caribou biologists.

4 Thank you. Quana.

5 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board,
6 Henry.

7 H. OHOKANNOAK: Thank you. I apologize. I
8 didn't -- my name is Henry Ohokannoak. I forgot to
9 mention my name. I'm with the NIRB as a board member.
10 Thank you for your honest answer to my question.

11 And my second question is the -- for the
12 project at the Goose camp and that -- between those
13 two. How -- I just want to see how -- they have to be
14 the --

15 THE INTERPRETER: The what -- wind turbines,
16 he's talking about.

17 H. OHOKANNOAK: And how far apart the wind
18 turbines are supposed to be installed between --

19 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

20 H. OHOKANNOAK: -- between Back River -- Back
21 River and Goose Lake.

22 THE INTERPRETER: Sorry.

23 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
24 Keefe, B2Gold.

25 If I may, I'm just -- I'd like to clarify the
26 question. Are you asking the distance between the wind

1 turbines that will be constructed, if approved, to the
2 Goose Mine, the distance between the turbines and
3 Goose? No. Sorry.

4 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board,
5 Henry.

6 H. OHOKANNOAK: I was asking about the
7 distance. How far apart are they? Like, Goose Lake --
8 from Goose Lake to Back River camp, what's the distance
9 between the two there?

10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Henry Ohokannoak,
11 Nunavut Impact Review Board.

12 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

13 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
14 Keefe with B2Gold.

15 The distance between Goose Lake and the turbines
16 is approximately 4.5 kilometres, so from the
17 accommodation complex to Goose Lake is -- is
18 4.5 kilometres, approximately.

19 I'll give you some additional distances. From
20 Goose Lake south to Back River is approximately
21 30 kilometres, and the distance between Goose Lake and
22 our -- our farthest site, or the marine laydown area,
23 that's approximately 130 kilometres as the crow flies.
24 The winter ice road is approximately 170 kilometres.

25 Hopefully I have answered your question. Thank
26 you.

1 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board,
2 Henry.

3 H. OHOKANNOAK: Thank you. NIRB member.

4 Thank you for your -- your honest question, and
5 now I know the answer.

6 That's all the questions I have, Mr. Chair.

7 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

8 Moving on to item -- Agenda Item Number 5. I will
9 ask that our legal counsel swear in and/or affirm the
10 next group of presenters for the third presentation and
11 mark the exhibits so that we can begin with the
12 presentation.

13 Teresa.

14 Procedural Matters by Nunavut Impact Review Board Legal
15 Counsel

16 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Teresa
17 Meadows, legal counsel for the Nunavut Impact Review
18 Board.

19 B2Gold, do you have any additional witnesses to
20 affirm for this? No.

21 So, Mr. Chair, I have presentation materials
22 entitled "Socioeconomic, Human Health, and Ecological
23 Risk Assessment", and I will be marking that as the
24 next exhibit in this public hearing.

25 And those are my procedural matters, Mr. Chair.

26 EXHIBIT 7 - Hard Copy PowerPoint

1 Presentation, B2Gold Nunavut Energy Centre,
2 Socio-Economic, Human Health and Ecological
3 Risk Assessment (English)

4 EXHIBIT 8 - Hard Copy PowerPoint

5 Presentation, B2Gold Nunavut Energy Centre,
6 Socio-Economic, Human Health and Ecological
7 Risk Assessment (Inuktitut)

8 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

9 B2Gold, you may proceed.

10 Presentation by B2Gold Corporation (B2Gold Nunavut
11 Energy Centre, Socio-Economic, Human Health and
12 Ecological Risk Assessment)

13 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you. Merle
14 Keefe, B2Gold.

15 I will now be providing the socioeconomic and
16 human health and ecological risk assessment
17 presentation.

18 In terms of the socioeconomic components -- the
19 valued socioeconomic components that were studied and
20 addressed at the Back River project, these are many of
21 them, archeology and paleontology, employment,
22 education and training, and country feuds -- foods and
23 human health to name a few.

24 We have ongoing monitoring efforts and management
25 plans developed to continually address these areas, and
26 we're committed to continuously improving these areas,

1 including the addition of a renewable energy centre to
2 the Back River project.

3 As previously mentioned, B2Gold is very fond and
4 proud of our community engagement program. Specific to
5 the Back River project energy centre, community and
6 stakeholder engagement has been ongoing since 2019, and
7 we've had 18 public meetings, 31 engagements to date
8 with Elder groups and representatives from the
9 communities of Bay Chimo and Bathurst Inlet as well as
10 hunters and trappers organizations.

11 And we have ongoing engagements with regulators,
12 the Kitikmeot Inuit Association. We've also created
13 and -- and discussed quite a bit here today, the Inuit
14 environmental advisory committee.

15 In terms of employment and economic development,
16 B2Gold will, by developing renewable energy
17 infrastructure for the project, create additional
18 economic expenditures within Nunavut to Inuit-owned
19 businesses. The renewable energy centre creates the
20 potential for additional Inuit business opportunities
21 through procurement with one or more Inuit firms to
22 build and maintain the renewable energy centre.

23 Additional employment and training opportunities
24 may be created to support the construction and the
25 ongoing operation of the renewable energy centre. We
26 also recognize that with the reduction of fuel required

1 and the corresponding reduction in trucking on the
2 winter ice road necessary that there may be a minor
3 reduction in the short-term winter ice road
4 truck driving employment opportunities.

5 In terms of traditional knowledge and land use, a
6 very important component of the socioeconomic
7 environment, we recognize the inherent value of
8 traditional knowledge and its importance to
9 environmental assessment.

10 Traditional knowledge was shared with us during
11 the original effects assessment by the Kitikmeot Inuit
12 Association's Naonaiyaotit traditional knowledge
13 project, and as I previously mentioned, we also
14 connected existing and publicly available traditional
15 knowledge from selected indigenous groups in the
16 Northwest Territories, and we continue to have meetings
17 with Inuit land users and hunters and trappers
18 organizations.

19 In terms of technical comments that have been
20 received on the Back River project energy centre as it
21 relates to the socioeconomics, we did not receive any
22 technical comments.

23 Moving on to the human health and ecological risk
24 assessment, as part of the original effects assessment,
25 the project risks to human health were evaluated, and
26 that looks at potential risks to human health. With

1 the addition of the renewable energy centre, we will
2 see an improvement in air quality, a reduction in dust
3 emissions from the project, and there will be no change
4 to the quality of vegetation or wildlife.

5 There is no predicted change to human health from
6 the addition of the renewable energy centre as it's
7 been identified as an area not traditionally used for
8 harvesting or travelling. And, again, by approximately
9 2 kilometres away, the wind turbines will be around the
10 sounds of a whisper in the background noise on the
11 tundra from the wind.

12 In terms of communities, B2Gold identified through
13 multiple sources that the key issue is related to Inuit
14 culture and harvesting and remaining vibrant
15 livelihoods. Communities should benefit from the
16 project is what we heard. We also heard that
17 employment and training should focus on youth and that
18 Inuit wanted programs to support workers and their
19 families when leaving their communities and coming to
20 our project site. We've worked hard to address these
21 issues, and we continue to do so, and I'll speak to
22 some of those.

23 We've created an Inuit employee assistance
24 program, and most recently we've partnered with the
25 Kitikmeot Friendship Society to help offer that program
26 to employees. It's a culturally appropriate support

1 system in partnership with the Kitikmeot Friendship
2 Society that has been created for B2Gold Nunavut Inuit
3 employees. We recognize the need for an Inuit-specific
4 employee and family assistance program, and it's
5 tailored to the unique needs of Inuit employees.

6 And -- and that system doesn't just exist if Inuit
7 need it. For example, if they've been away from their
8 family for a week and they're feeling homesick, the
9 Kitikmeot Friendship Society and our employee
10 assistance program will provide support for them in
11 that situation.

12 It's also proactive. So we're engaging with them
13 prior to them even coming to the Back River project
14 site. This employee assistance program is doing
15 pre-deployment work, and it's engaging with the Inuit
16 before they come to our project site and letting them
17 know that those support systems are there for them. We
18 also have post-deployment support, so when you're on
19 your time off. And we also have a crisis hotline
20 available at all times for Inuit employees should they
21 need it.

22 We have commitments to create a country food
23 facility at our project site, so a kitchen where
24 traditional food can be brought to our project site and
25 can be shared with Inuit, or other employees, but it
26 provides Inuit with the ability to eat traditional food

1 and not the food that the mine is serving.

2 In terms of technical comments that were received
3 during the application process and the review process
4 specific to human health, we did not receive any
5 technical comments.

6 Quana. Thank you.

7 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

8 Questions from the intervenors on the
9 socioeconomic presentation.

10 Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

11 D. FREDLUND: Quana, Ihivautaq.

12 At this time we have no questions. Quana.

13 THE CHAIR: Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

14 Kitikmeot Inuit Association Questions B2Gold
15 Corporation

16 J. EETOOLOOK James Eetoolook, Kitikmeot
17 Inuit Association.

18 I don't really have a question. I think the Inuit
19 and the non-Inuit in -- in a workforce like that, you
20 know, they -- they should try and mingle as much as
21 they can 'cause that cuts down a lot homesickness, you
22 know.

23 But, your presentation, I don't really have a
24 question to it. And, you know, it's -- I think it's
25 workable. And, you know, I talked to a few people that
26 work there, and they seem to be happy. And I think the

1 workforce -- you know, we like to see Inuit advancing
2 to the high position as well as time goes along.

3 Thank you.

4 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

5 B2Gold, do you have anything to add to that?

6 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you.

7 Merle Keefe, B2Gold.

8 Your comments are very appreciated. We have
9 initiated what we call country food nights where
10 traditional Inuit food is brought to the project site
11 by B2Gold. And it's open to not just Inuit, like you
12 mentioned, but also the southern workforce. I have
13 participated in many of those country food nights.

14 And to your point about mingling and understanding
15 other people's cultures, it is -- it is an awesome
16 event, and many southern employees try country food for
17 the first time whether it's muktuk or dipping it in the
18 soy sauce. And I don't know what I'm trying to say
19 here, James, but all I'm saying is that those country
20 food nights are -- you know, have been set up to expose
21 southern employees to Inuit culture, and they've been
22 received very well, including by myself.

23 Thank you.

24 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

25 Government of Nunavut.

26 Government of Nunavut Questions B2Gold Corporation

1 J. BULLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Justin
2 Buller for the Government of Nunavut.

3 It's been mentioned a few times, but I think there
4 was a question about the timeframe for construction and
5 that, realistically, you may have a couple years
6 between potential approval and construction. What
7 would be the delay associated with that -- or perhaps
8 the cause of that delay?

9 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

10 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you.
11 Merle Keefe, B2Gold.

12 Thank you for your question, Justin. In terms of
13 timeline for mobilization and construction, you are
14 correct. There are multiple years left prior to
15 actually seeing the wind turbines constructed if
16 approved.

17 In terms of those steps, you know, of course, this
18 existing regulatory process has to be completed. If
19 the project was allowed to proceed, then we have to
20 complete detailed and final engineering.

21 So the engineers will do the final studies and
22 modelling efforts based on the wind resource modelling
23 data we have and the economics and come up with the
24 final design for the project. After that happens,
25 B2Gold will need to fulfill the commitments we've made
26 to update environmental modelling, so greenhouse gas

1 emissions information or potentially reanalyzing
2 impacts to birds, and we'll have to complete that
3 modelling exercise as well.

4 Once final engineering and detailed engineering is
5 complete, then it's purely a matter of logistics in
6 long-lead items. These wind turbines, some of them
7 will be potentially brought to site from locations
8 throughout the world. And these will have to be during
9 open-water season shipped to the marine laydown area in
10 the winter, trucked down the winter ice road -- or
11 shipped during the open water season -- sorry --
12 trucked down the winter ice road during the winter
13 season, and then constructed that following summer.

14 So, to sum it up, the existing regulatory process
15 must be completed, then detailed engineering would have
16 to be completed as well as any potential commitments
17 we've made based on final engineering, and then we
18 would need to mobilize long-lead items to our project
19 site.

20 Thank you.

21 THE CHAIR: Government of Nunavut.

22 J. BULLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
23 thanks to Merle for the detailed explanation.

24 The interest is in understanding at what points
25 local firms, Inuit-owned companies, would have the
26 stated opportunities to participate in the construction

1 and potentially operation of your wind farm.

2 So I think we're -- we're trying to see how to
3 forecast the construction decision and the timeframe
4 associated with when you would be making some of those
5 decisions about your contractors and forecasting your
6 needs for labour to maximize the opportunity that local
7 firms and Inuit have to participate in your
8 construction, delivery, and everything associated with
9 that project if approved.

10 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

11 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you.

12 Merle Keefe, B2Gold.

13 It's a great question. And in terms of my
14 response, I want to point to a requirement that's built
15 into our Inuit Impact Benefit Agreement established by
16 the Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

17 Prior to any contracts being awarded, whether it's
18 related to wind turbines or anything in our project, so
19 blasting or heavy equipment providers, we have to
20 provide a proposal in advance of that activity being
21 completed to the Kitikmeot-qualified business registry.
22 And that's a -- a function created within the Inuit
23 Impact Benefit Agreement which gives Inuit-owned
24 businesses first pass at awarding or receiving
25 contracts or being awarded contracts on our project
26 site.

1 Thank you. Quana.

2 THE CHAIR: Government of Nunavut.

3 J. BULLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4 No, I appreciate that, and the relationship
5 between your procurement and the Inuit Impact Benefit
6 Agreement that you have with the Kitikmeot Inuit
7 Association notwithstanding.

8 We do have an interest in understanding what
9 opportunities exist or are planned for local
10 involvement. You mentioned earlier that you have a --
11 it sounds like you have a preferred contractor,
12 NextEra. That's a third party. I'm assuming that they
13 would be doing the bulk of the delivery and
14 construction, or do you have other partnerships
15 involved with that?

16 Thank you.

17 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

18 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair -- sorry -- thank
19 you. Merle Keefe, B2Gold.

20 You are correct. B2Gold Nunavut has partnered
21 with NextEra, the world's largest utility company who
22 specialize in building energy projects in North
23 America; however, an Inuit-owned firm has been engaged
24 as a partner to develop, construct, and operate the
25 project through a power supply agreement. This will
26 ensure the economic benefits through the project

1 revenues as well as new employment and training
2 opportunities that have really never existed on this
3 scale are provided to Inuit in the territory. And we
4 expect that the new employment opportunities will
5 result in new skills being introduced to Nunavut's
6 workforce, renewable energy centre skills, that are
7 really at the forefront of -- of the transition from
8 combustion engines and energy production to renewable
9 energy. So an Inuit-owned firm has been engaged.

10 THE CHAIR: Government of Nunavut.

11 J. BULLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
12 thanks for the response.

13 We certainly recognize that this is an opportunity
14 for new skills development that, as you said, is
15 somewhat unique to the territory and even to Canada
16 that having the opportunity to build skills in this
17 field is -- is crucial.

18 One of the benefits of the energy centre is the
19 reduction in diesel fuel use and reduced trucking and
20 reduced noise and the impacts associated with that
21 reduction of generator time as well. That also comes
22 with reduced need for staff when it comes to trucking
23 and hauling fuel, genset maintenance, and so on.

24 We were wondering if there was a plan for
25 retaining and retraining affected employees, and if one
26 of the programs you mentioned, the Inuit employment

1 assistance program or other programs, are built into
2 this anticipated change in employment levels or -- and
3 the needs of the project. And maybe a third aspect of
4 that is roughly how many employees do you anticipate
5 being affected by this change, and how many of them are
6 local?

7 Thank you.

8 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

9 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you.

10 Merle Keefe, B2Gold.

11 A few questions in there, Justin. I'll try to
12 answer them all.

13 In terms of -- one of the aspects you brought up
14 was -- there -- I believe was would there be a
15 potential for those lost positions to be retained and
16 training provided to give them employment elsewhere
17 within the Back River project, and the answer is yes.

18 Specifically to Inuit, we've made commitments to
19 have a certain percentage of our workforce as Inuit,
20 and we are committed to that number and working jointly
21 with the Kitikmeot Inuit Association to identify a
22 target.

23 So when reducing or reallocating employees on our
24 project site, we have to consider those commitments
25 that we've made to the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, so
26 specific to Inuit employees, and preferentially trying

1 to keep them and -- and provide additional economic
2 opportunities.

3 I think a second part of your question was whether
4 or not the employee assistance program that we have in
5 place, the Inuit employee assistance program, would be
6 able to provide support if a lost economic opportunity
7 was in the near future.

8 And, yes, absolutely the employee assistance
9 program is set up to help Inuit employees at our
10 project site. Whether or not that's introducing them
11 to a job or -- or potentially having them move on, the
12 employee assistance program isn't specific to either of
13 those.

14 THE CHAIR: Government of Nunavut.

15 M. KEEFE: Sorry, Mr. Chair. Thank you.
16 Merle Keefe with B2Gold.

17 I think the other question was about the number of
18 employees that could potentially be reduced from the
19 resulting -- the trucking.

20 The approximate number of winter ice road truck
21 drivers that we have now is around 100. So there would
22 be a reduction in that hundred applicable to the
23 reduced amount of trucking on the winter ice road. I
24 don't know what that specific number is, but it would
25 be a portion of that 100 truck driver -- 100 winter ice
26 road truck drivers.

1 Thank you. Quana.

2 THE CHAIR: Government of Nunavut.

3 J. BULLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
4 thanks, Merle, for the response.

5 I think just to take that a step further in regard
6 to the number of employees, it's not just the drivers.
7 I think earlier you said roughly 30 percent fewer truck
8 transits, so we would expect 30 percent fewer truck
9 drivers.

10 With that, you have a reduced need for fleet
11 maintenance and mechanics potentially. You may have a
12 reduced need for your genset maintainers or mechanics
13 because you're running your generators less.

14 We understand that there would be a spike in
15 employment during the construction phase of the wind
16 farm and the generators. We're wondering if you have
17 any forecast on the total level of employment of the
18 mine post-construction, so during the operation phase
19 of the wind farm should it be constructed, recognizing
20 the reduced level of activity elsewhere in the mine
21 that's associated with the operation of the wind farm.

22 Thank you.

23 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

24 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you.

25 Merle Keefe with B2Gold.

26 I'm going to ask my colleague Dennis Stansbury to

1 answer this question. Thank you.

2 D. STANSBURY: To start with -- oh -- sorry.

3 Mr. Chair, thank you. Dennis Stansbury, B2Gold.

4 To start with at these -- these remote sites,
5 we -- we have a lot of turnover. And we have turned
6 over Inuit people; we have turned over southern people.
7 We are constantly looking for people. So as things --
8 as one thing winds down, repurposing those people into
9 other positions is something we constantly look to do.
10 And we'll be -- and, again, priority to the Inuit
11 people. We'll be -- they'll be right up front.

12 You know, what -- if a guy was a maintenance guy
13 on a generator, he could probably be a pretty good
14 maintenance guy on a truck engine too. Okay. And we
15 have mobile fleets running around the surface, and we
16 have our underground fleets of equipment.

17 We have a constant need for maintenance people,
18 surface and underground, whether it be in the generator
19 house or in the truck shop -- I'll slow down.

20 Apologies.

21 But we're always looking for good electricians,
22 mechanics, and operators. We -- I think our plan is to
23 smooth out at about 500 employees. I think that's the
24 number we have right now, total employees.

25 So, yes, things will be changing with the -- with
26 the energy centre. There will be a spike during

1 construction. There will be specific people brought in
2 from the south to erect these towers. It's a very
3 unique construction. Way up in the air. Big pieces to
4 handle. There will be a special crane brought in to do
5 all of this, so there will be experts brought in for
6 that construction.

7 We will be bringing -- a question came up on
8 the -- on the ice road. I mean, we're -- this -- this
9 winter, we will be doing detailed looks at that ice
10 road: curve radiuses, clearances for trailers,
11 everything like that.

12 But for the -- for the employment, employment is
13 something where we're always looking for good, trained
14 people. Employees we're happy with, with skill sets
15 out on that site will have a job long-term. So my
16 answer.

17 THE CHAIR: Government of Nunavut.

18 J. BULLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
19 thank you, Dennis, for the response.

20 No, I appreciate the added detail, and we
21 understand the shift in employment will have changes
22 and that -- I think the concern is that if we are able
23 to provide that training, whether that's by the company
24 or partnership with the Inuit association or
25 contractors, Inuit-owned firms, that that is the
26 interest. I don't -- I don't think there's an

1 expectation that we'll have a -- a wind farm company
2 with decades of expertise in Nunavut for this project.

3 I think the expectation is that associating people
4 who are living and working in Nunavut with this type of
5 industry is forward-looking and positive, and that
6 where we have the opportunity to do so, we should.

7 And that while you're always looking for people to
8 join your team, you're looking for good staff on your
9 site; those willing may not necessarily have the skills
10 that you're looking for and that they'll need support
11 to get that training. Or even just being associated
12 with the operations that you just described.

13 Because if your project is a test case for how you
14 can run a large-scale wind farm in Nunavut, the folks
15 that are able to be there on-site and see how those
16 towers are erected and see that construction process
17 gives them the basic skill set to participate in future
18 projects, and we see that as highly valuable.

19 So I think that's more of a comment than a
20 question, but I appreciate the detail on the questions
21 that I have asked so far.

22 Thank you. No further questions from the
23 Government of Nunavut.

24 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

25 Before we move on to Government of Northwest
26 Territories, we'll take a 15-minute break.

1 (ADJOURNMENT)

2 THE CHAIR: Welcome back, everyone. Next
3 up we have Government of Northwest Territories.

4 J. HODSON: Yes. Thank you. This is
5 James Hodson with the Government of the Northwest
6 Territories.

7 We don't have any questions on this presentation.
8 Thanks.

9 THE CHAIR: Crown-Indigenous Relations and
10 Northern Affairs Canada.

11 S. DEWAR: Quana, Ihivautaq.
12 Spencer Dewar.

13 The Government of Canada has no questions at this
14 time.

15 THE CHAIR: Health Canada.

16 C. DUTCHAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
17 Cassidy Dutchak, Health Canada.

18 No questions.

19 S. KIDD: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
20 Scott Kidd for Transport Canada.

21 I have no questions.

22 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board
23 staff.

24 Nunavut Impact Review Board Staff Questions B2Gold
25 Corporation

26 T. ARKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1 One question from Nunavut Impact Review Board
2 staff. If B2Gold could provide more detail on the
3 archeological surveys planned before construction of
4 the new components and/or possible adjustments to road
5 alignment to ensure the smooth movement of the
6 trailers, please.

7 Thanks.

8 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

9 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you.
10 Merle Keefe with B2Gold.

11 Thank you for your question. In terms of the
12 first -- the first part of your question and
13 archeological sites potentially within the development
14 area of the wind turbines, in advance of submitting the
15 application to the Nunavut Impact Review Board for the
16 Back River project energy centre modification, we
17 collected baseline environmental information.

18 One of those pieces we collected was archeological
19 information. So we had registered archeologists within
20 the territory sweep the potential development area of
21 the energy centre where the wind turbines would be
22 created. Also, the solar array or -- or the battery
23 energy systems. So we've actually already had
24 archeologists sweep those areas for archeological
25 evidence, and none -- no sites were found.

26 In addition, we didn't just search the area for

1 staff.

2 T. ARKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

3 Tara Arko, Nunavut Impact Review Board staff.

4 No further questions.

5 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

6 And we have nothing from the Board.

7 Moving on to Agenda Number 5. I will ask that our
8 legal counsel swear in or affirm the next group of
9 presenters for B2Gold, next presentation, and mark the
10 exhibits so that we can begin with the presentation.

11 Teresa.

12 Procedural Matters by Nunavut Impact Review
13 Board Legal Counsel

14 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15 Teresa Meadows, legal counsel for the Nunavut Impact
16 Review Board.

17 So, Mr. Chair, it's my understanding that there
18 are no additional witnesses. But I do have the
19 presentation materials entitled "Alternatives,
20 Accidents and Malfunctions, and Cumulative Effects",
21 and I propose to file those exhibits as the next two
22 exhibits in the public hearing.

23 EXHIBIT 9 - Hard Copy, PowerPoint
24 Presentation, B2Gold Nunavut Energy Centre,
25 Alternatives, Accidents and Malfunctions, and
26 Cumulative Effects Presentation (English)

1 EXHIBIT 10 - Hard Copy, PowerPoint
2 Presentation, B2Gold Nunavut Energy Centre,
3 Alternatives, Accidents and Malfunctions, and
4 Cumulative Effects Presentation (Inuktitut)

5 T. MEADOWS: And, Mr. Chair, those are my
6 procedural matters.

7 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Teresa.

8 Back to you, B2Gold. You may proceed with your
9 presentation on alternatives, accidents and
10 malfunctions, and cumulative effects.

11 Presentation by B2Gold Corporation (B2Gold Nunavut
12 Energy Centre, Alternatives, Accidents and
13 Malfunctions, and Cumulative Effects)

14 M. KEEFE: Mr. Chair, thank you.
15 Merle Keefe with B2Gold.

16 In terms of the alternatives assessment within the
17 Back River project energy centre, it was evaluated
18 according to the same key criteria that were utilized
19 in the final environmental impact statement, and that
20 consists of metrics such as the technical feasibility,
21 economic viability, potential impacts to the
22 environment to name a few.

23 Renewable energy was actually an alternative to
24 diesel power generation during the original Back River
25 project final environmental impact statement. So
26 renewable energy was an alternative during the original

1 mine proposal.

2 Diesel power generation remains a very reliable
3 source of power in arctic conditions and remains a
4 necessary source of power at Back River including as a
5 backup to renewable energy; however, improvements since
6 the original FEIS, or final environmental impact
7 statement, in the technical feasibility and the energy
8 storage as well as a strong interest and support from
9 communities for renewable energy has taken renewable
10 energy from not just an alternative that was identified
11 during the original environmental impact statement but
12 to something that we want to proceed and progress as a
13 reality.

14 The economic analysis via multiple feasibility
15 studies completed since 2019 continue to faithfully
16 show that the Back River project renewable energy
17 centre is both technically feasible but also
18 economically feasible.

19 In terms of technical comments that were received
20 from reviewers throughout this regulatory process on
21 alternative assessment, there were none received.

22 The accidents and malfunctions assessment. In
23 terms of methodology, we assessed the risk of major
24 accidents or malfunctions that could occur as a result
25 of the project. The identified hazards are not unique
26 to the Back River project and are common of any

1 northern mining operation. And the assessment of those
2 risks and mitigating those risks is a process that
3 continues throughout the life of the project and really
4 is embedded within every aspect of a project site.

5 Safety is always first and foremost at a mining
6 activity in a mining environment. Every day a safety
7 toolbox meeting occurs where you talk about what you're
8 going to do for the day and how you're going to
9 mitigate any potential accidents or malfunctions that
10 could occur. In the original final environmental
11 impact statement within the accidents and malfunctions
12 section, the primary environmental concern was the
13 possibility for spills, petroleum products into land or
14 water.

15 It's noted with the addition of the renewable
16 energy system that the Back River project will reduce
17 the amount of petroleum products required to be
18 mobilized and utilized on-site, therefore ultimately
19 reducing the primary concerns from accidents and
20 malfunctions at the mine site.

21 In terms of technical comments that were received
22 on the accidents and malfunctions assessment, there was
23 one technical comment from the Kitikmeot Inuit
24 Association which has now been resolved. I will note
25 the error in that presentation. It should say "1"
26 under "resolved" instead of "0".

1 In terms of the cumulative effects assessment, the
2 potential for cumulative effects to occur arises from
3 residual effects of a project overlapping or
4 interacting with the resource or the receptor of other
5 past, existing, or reasonably foreseeable projects.

6 For the purpose of the assessment of the
7 Back River project energy centre, cumulative effects
8 were evaluated in two steps. So the cumulative effect
9 of the energy centre, residual effects added to what
10 was originally assessed within the final environmental
11 impact statement, as well as the cumulative effect of
12 the energy centre added to any other past, present, or
13 reasonably foreseeable future projects.

14 Through the cumulative effects assessment, no
15 changes to the predicted residual effects are
16 anticipated to occur, and, therefore, the cumulative
17 effects remain predicted to be not significant with
18 respect to all valued ecosystem components and valued
19 socioeconomic ecosystem components.

20 In terms of technical comments that were received
21 on the cumulative effects assessment, there were no
22 technical comments received.

23 Quana. Thank you.

24 THE CHAIR: Thank you, B2Gold, for the
25 presentation.

26 Now to questions from the intervenors on the

1 presentation.

2 Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

3 D. FREDLUND: Dustin Fredlund, Nunavut
4 Tunngavik. Qujannamiik, Ihivautaq.

5 At this time we have no questions for B2Gold.
6 Thank you.

7 THE CHAIR: Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

8 J. EETOOLOOK: Thank you. James Eetoolook.

9 At this moment we don't have any questions. Thank
10 you.

11 THE CHAIR: Government of Nunavut.

12 J. BULLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Justin
13 Buller for the Government of Nunavut.

14 We have no questions related to the presentation
15 just provided. Thank you.

16 THE CHAIR: Government of the Northwest
17 Territories online.

18 J. HODSON: James Hodson with the
19 Government of the Northwest Territories.

20 No questions. Thank you.

21 THE CHAIR: Crown-Indigenous Relations and
22 Northern Affairs Canada.

23 S. DEWAR: Quana, Mr. Chair.
24 Spencer Dewar.

25 The Government of Canada has no questions.

26 THE CHAIR: Health Canada.

1 C. DUTCHAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2 Cassidy Dutchak, Health Canada.

3 No questions.

4 THE CHAIR: Transport Canada.

5 S. KIDD: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6 Scott Kidd for Transport Canada.

7 I have no questions.

8 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board
9 staff.

10 T. ARKO: Tara Arko, Nunavut Impact
11 Review Board staff.

12 No questions on this topic. Thank you.

13 THE CHAIR: No questions from Nunavut
14 Impact Review Board.

15 Moving on to Item 6, presentations from registered
16 intervenors.

17 I would ask that our legal counsel swear or affirm
18 the next group of presenters for the -- from Nunavut
19 Tunngavik Incorporated and mark the exhibits so that we
20 can begin with the presentation.

21 Teresa.

22 Procedural Matters by Nunavut Impact Review
23 Board Legal Counsel

24 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25 Teresa Meadows, legal counsel for the Nunavut Impact
26 Review Board.

1 Mr. Chair, it's my understanding that there aren't
2 formal presentation materials to be marked as exhibits,
3 but I would like to have the next panel -- have the
4 witnesses state and spell their names for the record,
5 please.

6 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Tunngavik.

7 G. NIRLUNGAYUK: Qujannamiik.

8 It's Gabriel Nirlungayuk. G-A-B-R-I-E-L
9 N-I-R-L-U-N-G-A-Y-U-K. And I am with Nunavut Tunngavik
10 Inc.

11 D. FREDLUND: Dustin Fredlund with Nunavut
12 Tunngavik as well. D-U-S-T-I-N F-R-E-D-L-U-N-D.
13 Quana. That's not part of my name.

14 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
15 Teresa Meadows, legal counsel for the Nunavut Impact
16 Review Board.

17 Do the witnesses wish to be sworn or affirmed?

18 G. NIRLUNGAYUK: Affirmed, please.

19 D. FREDLUND: Affirmed. Likewise.

20 GABRIEL NIRLUNGAYUK, DUSTIN FREDLUND, Affirmed

21 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

22 Teresa Meadows, legal counsel for the Nunavut Impact
23 Review Board.

24 So, Mr. Chair, that concludes my procedural
25 matters.

26 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Teresa.

1 Over to you, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

2 T. MEADOWS: So, Mr. Chair, that concludes
3 my procedural matters.

4 THE CHAIR: Over to you, Nunavut Tunngavik
5 Incorporated.

6 Presentation by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated

7 G. NIRLUNGAYUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
8 came to ask -- Gabriel Nirlungayuk, director of
9 wildlife and environment to provide our statement.
10 Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 And thank you, Dustin. This afternoon NTI is --
12 is very pleased to be -- to be participating in the
13 Nunavut Impact Review Board hearing and as well
14 tomorrow at the community roundtable on the B2Gold
15 Back River energy centre project proposal under
16 Section K 12.8.2 of the Nunavut Agreement and the --
17 and Section 112 of the Nunavut Planning and Project
18 Assessment Act.

19 We want to thank Nunavut Impact Review Board for
20 organizing this hearing and the residents of Cambridge
21 Bay for welcoming us. We also want to thank Elders and
22 residents of other affected communities for
23 participating in this hearing and share their views.

24 Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.'s role, our mission, is to
25 advance the economic, social, and cultural well-being
26 of Nunavut Inuit. NTI represents Nunavut Inuit and

1 safeguards Inuit rights recognized and affirmed by
2 Section 35 of the Canadian constitution and including
3 treaty and other Aboriginal rights, as well as those
4 affirmed by United Nation's declaration on the rights
5 of Indigenous people.

6 NTI is a designated Inuit organization generally
7 known as a DIO under the Nunavut Agreement for the
8 purpose of ensuring that the rights of -- and
9 obligations provided under the -- under the agreement
10 are fully implemented. In this regard, NTI works
11 closely with the regional Inuit association, in this
12 case the KIA, Kitikmeot Inuit Association, that
13 exercises certain responsibilities as designated by
14 NTI.

15 Kitikmeot Inuit Association is designated as the
16 DIO administering the service title of the Inuit-owned
17 lands in the Kitikmeot region. Kitikmeot Inuit
18 Association is also designated as the DIO for the
19 negotiations of the Nunavut Impact Benefit Agreement
20 with the proponent with the -- respect to major
21 development projects in the Kitikmeot region.

22 NTI is the DIO on the Article 5 of the Nunavut
23 Agreement, which guarantees Inuit many rights in
24 harvesting and the wildlife co-management. For
25 example, under Section 5.6.1 of the Nunavut Agreement,
26 Inuit have the right to harvest wildlife to their full

1 level of economic, social, and cultural needs when
2 there's no total allowable harvest level established.

3 NTI's role is to ensure that Inuit rights under
4 the Article 5 are recognized, implemented, and not
5 infringed upon. Further, NTI holds the subsurface
6 titles of Inuit-owned lands often known as "subsurface
7 IOLs" in the Kitikmeot region and also has the
8 overriding responsibility in ensuring the full
9 implementation of Inuit rights under the Nunavut
10 Agreement, which includes, for example, the institution
11 of public governments' processes are in -- keeping up
12 with the Nunavut Agreement and uphold Inuit
13 participation and consultation requirements.

14 In this NIRB review process, NTI supports the
15 Kitikmeot Inuit Association recognizing Kitikmeot Inuit
16 Association as the primary DIO in the assessment of the
17 project in the Kitikmeot region by virtue of its
18 designated responsibility on the management of the
19 surface titles of the Inuit-owned lands.

20 Further, NTI supports Kitikmeot Inuit Association,
21 the Kitikmeot regional wildlife board, the hunters and
22 trappers organization, and the communities generally in
23 addressing issues that are of concern to all Inuit in
24 the Nunavut, including the promotion of Inuit culture
25 and the safeguarding of Nunavut wildlife, environment,
26 culture, lands, and the economy.

1 In participating in this hearing, NTI is informed
2 by parties' submissions as well as the NIRB prehearing
3 conference decisions reported issues on November 24,
4 2023, after a prehearing conference held by NIRB in
5 Cambridge Bay on October 3 to 5, 2023.

6 In the prehearing conference report, NIRB
7 concluded that the technical issues related to the
8 proposal had been largely solved with very few
9 unresolved technical issues remaining, and, as a
10 result, the B2Gold proposal is ready to proceed to the
11 final public hearing stage.

12 On the -- on the issue that the -- one of the
13 issues of -- that NTI would like to comment on is the
14 potential impact on caribou, which has been one of the
15 central issues commented by other parties as well.

16 At the prehearing conference in October 2023, NIRB
17 heard from community members the critical importance of
18 caribou to their health, livelihood, and culture and
19 the necessity in finding a way to ensure that the
20 monitor and mitigation measures in place meet the
21 expectation of the hunters and trappers organization,
22 reflect Inuit Qaujimaqatunangit and Indigenous
23 knowledge.

24 NTI would like to echo the community concerns on
25 the importance of caribou monitoring and mitigation
26 measures. As discussed at the recent NIRB hearing on

1 the Meliadine extension proposal, a project in the
2 Kivalliq region, a high degree of uncertainty exists
3 regarding the potential impacts of the wind farm on the
4 behaviour responses and migration of barren-ground
5 caribou of these structures.

6 Given the culture and social-economic importance
7 of caribou to Inuit and other affected Indigenous
8 groups, NTI urges NIRB to consider all measures to
9 mitigate any impacts on caribou. This should include
10 at minimum discussions of location of placement of wind
11 turbines on the caribou habitat, a robust monitoring
12 plan, and reporting all data on detection of caribou
13 responses to the project.

14 We have heard from B2Gold that not too many people
15 are hunting in that area. However, there are many
16 previous -- I'm sure that there are human interactions
17 in that area. Out of site, out of mind, you know,
18 that's not going to work.

19 Further, because of any potential impacts of the
20 project on Inuit harvesting would have bearing on Inuit
21 rights safeguarded under the Nunavut Agreement, NTI
22 encourages NIRB to work with, in addition to NTI and
23 Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Inuit from affected
24 communities, Inuit wildlife organizations on issues.
25 This includes hunters and trappers organizations
26 related to the caribou monitoring management.

1 In conclusion, NTI working with Kitikmeot Inuit
2 Association, we look forward to engaging with NIRB and
3 other participants at this public hearing.

4 Health of wildlife population, especially caribou,
5 and respect for harvesting rights are of critical
6 importance to Inuit and other Indigenous groups
7 affected by the project. The reconsideration process
8 for the proposal must enhance terms and conditions in
9 the project certificate and ensure that appropriate
10 monitoring mitigation measures are in place to
11 reduce -- mitigate impacts on environment, wildlife,
12 and Inuit harvesting rights.

13 Thank you.

14 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Nunavut Tunngavik
15 Incorporated.

16 Now we have questions about the presentation.
17 Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

18 J. EETOOLOOK: Qujannamiik, Ihivautaq. James
19 Eetoolook, Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

20 As of now, we don't have any questions from KIA.
21 No questions from Kitikmeot Inuit Association.
22 Qujannamiik.

23 THE CHAIR: Government of Nunavut.

24 J. BULLER: Justin Buller for the
25 Government of Nunavut.

26 I want to thank Nunavut Tunngavik for their

1 presentation and Gabriel's statement. Thank you. No
2 further questions.

3 THE CHAIR: Crown-Indigenous Relations and
4 Northern Affairs Canada.

5 S. DEWAR: Quana, Mr. Chair.

6 The Government of Canada has no questions.
7 Ma'tna.

8 THE CHAIR: Health Canada.

9 C. DUTCHAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Cassidy
10 Dutchak, Health Canada.

11 No questions.

12 THE CHAIR: Transport Canada.

13 S. KIDD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Scott
14 Kidd for Transport Canada.

15 I have no questions for Nunavut Tunngavik. Thank
16 you.

17 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

18 M. KEEFE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Merle
19 Keefe, B2Gold.

20 We have no questions.

21 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board
22 staff.

23 T. ARKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tara
24 Arko, Nunavut Impact Review Board staff.

25 No questions at this time.

26 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

1 Also no questions from the Nunavut Impact Review
2 Board.

3 We will now continue with Agenda Item Number 6.2,
4 the presentation from the next intervenor, the
5 Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

6 Teresa, can you please complete the procedural
7 matter for the Kitikmeot Inuit Association. Teresa.
8 Procedural Matters by Nunavut Impact Review Board Legal
9 Counsel

10 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Teresa
11 Meadows, legal counsel for the Nunavut Impact Review
12 Board.

13 So, Mr. Chair, if I can have the next witnesses
14 state and spell their name for the record, please.

15 J. EETOOLOOK: James Eetoolook,
16 E-E-T-O-O-L-O-O-K.

17 J. ROESCH: John Roesch, J-O-H-N
18 R-O-E-S-C-H.

19 C. CHUI: Celia Chui, C-E-L-I-A C-H-U-I.

20 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Teresa
21 Meadows, legal counsel for the Nunavut Impact Review
22 Board.

23 Do the witnesses wish to be sworn or affirmed?

24 J. EETOOLOOK: Sworn in.

25 J. ROESCH: Sworn in. Thank you.

26 C. CHUI: I'd like to be affirmed,

1 please.

2 JAMES EETOOLOOK, JOHN ROESCH, Sworn

3 CELIA CHUI, Affirmed

4 T. MEADOWS: Teresa Meadows, legal counsel
5 for the Nunavut Impact Review Board.

6 So I have, Mr. Chair, three presentations from the
7 Kitikmeot Inuit Association entitled "KIA Public
8 Hearing of Back River Project Renewable Energy Centre",
9 and I have them in English, I have one in Inuktitut,
10 and I have one in Inuinnaqtun. And I propose to file
11 those as the next three exhibits in the public hearing.

12 And, Mr. Chair, that concludes my procedural
13 matters.

14 EXHIBIT 11 - Hard Copy PowerPoint
15 Presentation, Kitikmeot Inuit Association,
16 KIA Public Hearing of Back River Project
17 Renewable Energy Center (English)

18 EXHIBIT 12 - Hard Copy PowerPoint
19 Presentation, Kitikmeot Inuit Association,
20 KIA Public Hearing of Back River Project
21 Renewable Energy Center (Inuktitut)

22 EXHIBIT 13 - Hard Copy PowerPoint
23 Presentation, Kitikmeot Inuit Association,
24 KIA Public Hearing of Back River Project
25 Renewable Energy Center (Inuinnaqtun)

26 J. ROESCH: Mr. Chairman, this is John

1 Roesch for the KIA.

2 I'd like to interject that James will have a
3 formal statement, so that should be entered as well.
4 We have a printout if you don't have it. Okay.

5 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Teresa
6 Meadows, legal counsel for the Nunavut Impact Review
7 Board.

8 Yes, please, if you can provide it to me
9 afterwards. I will mark it as the fourth exhibit
10 that's filed by the Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

11 Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe those are my
12 procedural matters concluded.

13 EXHIBIT 14 - Hard Copy Statement from
14 Kitikmeot Inuit Association representative
15 James Eetoolook, Vice President of Lands and
16 Resources and Environment (English)

17 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Teresa.

18 Kitikmeot Inuit Association, you may proceed with
19 your presentation.

20 Presentation by Kitikmeot Inuit Association

21 J. EETOOLOOK: Thank you Mr. Chair. I'm
22 James Eetoolook representing Kitikmeot Inuit
23 Association at this public hearing held here in
24 Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, February 27.

25 The Kitikmeot Inuit Association is a designated
26 Inuit organization under Article 39 of the Nunavut

1 Agreement, a Regional Inuit Association incorporated as
2 a non-profit society responsible for management of
3 Inuit-owned lands in Kitikmeot region of the western
4 Nunavut.

5 Kitikmeot Inuit Association strictly administers
6 Article 19, title to Inuit-owned lands; Article 20,
7 which is Inuit water rights; Article 21, entry and
8 access; Article 25, resource royalty sharing; and
9 Article 26, which is Inuit impact and benefit
10 agreements of Nunavut Agreement.

11 Kitikmeot Inuit Association's mandate is to manage
12 Kitikmeot Inuit-owned lands and to protect the
13 interests of the Kitikmeot Inuit.

14 Kitikmeot Inuit Association supports renewable
15 energy projects in Kitikmeot lands. Kitikmeot Inuit
16 Association also recognizes the potential impact of
17 wind turbines. After careful consideration, Kitikmeot
18 Inuit Association is satisfied with the response to
19 14 technical comments and consider these comments to be
20 resolved.

21 Kitikmeot Inuit Association has always supported
22 the use of renewable energy in proponent projects to
23 reduce the transfer of fuel -- fuel oil in Kitikmeot
24 Inuit lands. The reduction of oil on the lands reduces
25 the risk of -- benefits by the reduce -- reducing the
26 emission of greenhouse gasses. The use of renewable

1 energy proponent project is a net profit to the
2 interest of Kitikmeot Inuit communities. This project
3 is best use of Kitikmeot-owned lands with a benefit of
4 Kitikmeot community members.

5 The caribou are invaluable to Kitikmeot
6 communities. The health of caribou herds in Kitikmeot
7 lands prompted the submission of technical comments to
8 B2Gold. Ongoing discussions between Kitikmeot
9 community members and biologists and Kitikmeot Inuit
10 Association leaders have resulted in a cautious
11 solution that protects the caribou while additional
12 data is collected. The decision is informed by our
13 biologists and Kitikmeot community knowledges.

14 The caribou technical advisor committee was
15 established to facilitate ongoing technical discussions
16 between the B2Gold Nunavut Kitikmeot Inuit Association
17 and the Government of Nunavut on caribou monitoring and
18 the mitigation for the duration of the project
19 operation.

20 The caribou technical advisory group discusses
21 technical issues with the biologists to make joint
22 discussions -- decisions pertaining to monitoring,
23 mitigation, reporting, and changes to the standard
24 operating procedures to protect the caribou.

25 The caribou technical advisory committee
26 facilitates Kitikmeot Inuit Association's

1 responsibilities as landowner in the preservation of
2 wildlife on Inuit-owned land as well as our
3 responsibilities as a designated Inuit organization in
4 the region of Kitikmeot.

5 The caribou technical advisory committee is an
6 important venue for Kitikmeot Inuit communities. This
7 is for knowledge, and concern about Kitikmeot Inuit
8 lands are the forefront of discussion informing ongoing
9 monitoring and mitigation measures.

10 Kitikmeot Inuit Association representatives for
11 communities, Kitikmeot Inuit Association board members
12 include representatives from all Kitikmeot communities
13 who regularly consult with the local hunters and
14 trappers organizations. This level of community
15 engagement is integral to Kitikmeot Inuit Association's
16 mandate to protect the interest of Kitikmeot Inuit.

17 Kitikmeot Inuit Association members sit with the
18 caribou technical advisory group. It ensures that the
19 knowledge of the concerns of the entire Kitikmeot
20 region are represented.

21 Kitikmeot Inuit Association and caribou technical
22 advisory group welcome surrounding communities to
23 review the information produced from our discussions.

24 And this is end of our -- end of my presentation.
25 Thank you very much. Merci.

26 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Kitikmeot Inuit

1 Association.

2 Now we have questions about the presentation.

3 Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

4 Sorry. Go ahead.

5 J. ROESCH: Hello, everyone. I am John
6 Roesch, the senior Hope Bay project officer for the
7 department of lands and environment for the Kitikmeot
8 Inuit Association.

9 I am responsible for the project oversight for the
10 Kitikmeot Inuit Association and provide input into the
11 regulatory process on the Back River project to both
12 the NIRB and the Nunavut Water Board. In performing
13 this role, I make use of KIA's consultants who are
14 subject-matter experts in the areas of hydrology,
15 hydrogeology, fisheries, aquatic environment, and
16 geotechnical engineering.

17 The purpose of this presentation is to provide --

18 THE CHAIR: Excuse me.

19 J. ROESCH: -- a summary --

20 THE CHAIR: Can you slow down, please.

21 J. ROESCH: Okay.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

23 J. ROESCH: The purpose of -- of this
24 presentation is to provide a summary of our technical
25 review of the Back River renewable energy centre FEIS
26 or addendum. Our review covered caribou migratory

1 birds and raptors. KIA consulted the review in a
2 collaborative manner with Sabina Gold & Silver, now
3 B2Gold Nunavut, out of which we brought forward
4 12 issues from the original submission in November
5 2022.

6 These issues were resolved. Another 14 issues
7 were identified in the review of the Back River
8 renewable energy centre FEIS addendum. Through
9 discussions with B2Gold Nunavut, all these issues were
10 resolved.

11 KIA's mandate is to manage Kitikmeot Inuit-owned
12 lands and resources and to protect and promote the
13 social, cultural, political, environmental, and
14 economic well-being of Kitikmeot Inuit.

15 The Kitikmeot Inuit region is generally within the
16 red boundary. The pink and blue lands are lands which
17 KIA owns the surface rights. The Kitikmeot Inuit
18 Association is a democratically elected not-for-profit
19 society that represents the Inuit of the Kitikmeot
20 region of Nunavut.

21 As a result of the Nunavut Agreement, Inuit are
22 one of the largest private landowners in the world.
23 Much of this privately owned land is in the areas with
24 high potential for mineral development. This land is a
25 significant opportunity for Inuit if it is managed
26 properly. We must optimize opportunities and manage

1 liabilities that are inherent with being a private
2 landowner. If not, we will affect the well-being of
3 our Kitikmeot Inuit membership.

4 The Back River project composed of the marine
5 laydown area, winter road, and Goose Lake mine site is
6 located on the mainland south of Bathurst Inlet and in
7 the southern part of the region.

8 The Back River project composed of the marine
9 laydown area, winter ice road, and the Goose Lake mine
10 site reside on five Inuit-owned land parcels, these
11 being BB-02, BB-13, BB-15, BB-16, and BB-27.

12 The -- the marine laydown area is in BB-27, and
13 the Goose Lake mine site is in BB-13. The winter ice
14 road runs from the marine laydown area to Goose Lake
15 through all the parcels.

16 Exploration camps currently exist at Goose Lake
17 and George sites. The George site is an area of
18 exploration and future development. It is currently
19 only open in the summer for exploration and will not be
20 developed into a mine site in the immediate future. On
21 the map, you can see the locations of some of the
22 highest priority development sites are the marine
23 laydown area and Goose Lake.

24 This map shows the Back River and Wishbone mineral
25 claims held by B2Gold Nunavut, formerly Sabina. Now
26 with the marine laydown area near the top of the map

1 and Goose Lake in the southeast area of the map, only
2 the marine laydown area, winter ice road, and Goose
3 Lake camp are developed at this present time.

4 Mine site construction is currently going on at
5 Goose Lake. This is a picture of the Goose Lake
6 exploration camp in September 2020. The Goose Lake
7 mine site is being developed at this location and will
8 have four mining areas within it.

9 The mines will be both open-pit and underground
10 mines for each of the Goose Lake deposits, these being
11 Umwelt, Llama, Goose main, and Echo. The mine will
12 operate for about 15 years producing at least
13 350,000 ounces of gold. The mill will process about
14 6,000 tonnes of ore per day. The doré bars produced at
15 site will be flown out on aircraft.

16 The Kitikmeot Inuit Association had identified
17 12 issues in the original review of the Back River
18 renewable energy centre submission. These 12 issues
19 pertaining to birds and caribou were, 1, the number of
20 turbines; 2, wind energy installation configuration; 3,
21 the relative height and elevation of turbines; 4,
22 guy-wires; 5, lights; 6, motion smear; 7, transmission
23 lines; 8, ancillary loss -- habitat loss; 9, attraction
24 of site to birds; 10, industrial and other waste; 11,
25 decommissioning of turbines; 12, disruption of caribou
26 movement.

1 In March 2023, the Kitikmeot Inuit Association
2 discussed these issues with B2Gold Nunavut, made
3 commitments that were -- that resolved 11 of these
4 issues with one issue, the type and colour of wind
5 turbine lights being unresolved.

6 Proposed changes to Terms and Conditions 37, 39,
7 and 51 were discussed and accepted with new Terms and
8 Condition 95. It was specifically adopted for wind
9 turbines based on a similar term and condition for the
10 Hope Bay project.

11 One information request was submitted to NIRB in
12 April 2023 on wind turbine lighting. B2Gold Nunavut
13 committed to using directional lighting rather than
14 broad lighting to reduce attraction to birds. However,
15 the colour of the lights must conform to Transport
16 Canada regulations and cannot be changed from red and
17 white to other colours.

18 In June 2023, review of the Back River energy
19 centre FEIS addendum, Kitikmeot Inuit Association's
20 wildlife consultant identified 14 issues. Four of
21 these issues: One, turbine height differences and
22 implementations; five, discussions with Transport
23 Canada; six, sensory disturbance and disruption of
24 caribou; and, nine, references for migratory birds and
25 raptors are consultantly, explicitly disagreed with,
26 the FEIS addendum conclusion. These issues were

1 resolved along with others during discussions with
2 B2Gold Nunavut with further commitments being made.

3 All 14 are resolved, and KIA is satisfied with the
4 commitments made by B2Gold Nunavut for each identified
5 issue. The KIA believes that with all identified
6 technical issues resolved with commitments, the
7 renewable energy centre can proceed to final public
8 hearing and approval. We thank you for listening, and
9 we are open to any questions.

10 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Kitikmeot Inuit
11 Association.

12 Questions about the presentation, Nunavut
13 Tunngavik Incorporated.

14 D. FREDLUND: Qujannamiik, Ihivautaq.
15 Dustin Fredlund, Nunavut Tunngavik.

16 At this time, we have no questions. Thank you.

17 THE CHAIR: Government of Nunavut.

18 J. BULLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Justin
19 Buller for the Government of Nunavut.

20 No. We thank John and Eetoolook for their
21 presentations and have no questions about the content.
22 Thank you.

23 THE CHAIR: Government of the Northwest
24 Territories online.

25 J. HODSON: James Hodson with the
26 Government of the Northwest Territories.

1 No questions. Thank you.

2 THE CHAIR: Crown-Indigenous Relations and
3 Northern Affairs Canada.

4 S. DEWAR: Quana, Ihivautaq. Spencer
5 Dewar.

6 The Government of Canada has no questions at this
7 time.

8 THE CHAIR: Health Canada.

9 C. DUTCHAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Cassidy
10 Dutchak, Health Canada.

11 No questions.

12 THE CHAIR: Transport Canada.

13 S. KIDD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Scott
14 Kidd for Transport Canada.

15 I have no questions for the Kitikmeot Inuit
16 Association. Thank you.

17 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

18 M. KEEFE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Merle
19 Keefe, B2Gold.

20 We have no questions. Thank you.

21 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board
22 staff.

23 T. ARKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tara
24 Arko, Nunavut Impact Review Board staff.

25 No questions as they were all answered with the
26 presentation. Thank you.

1 THE CHAIR: Ourselves, no questions from
2 the Nunavut Impact Review Board.

3 Moving on to Agenda Number 5.3, the presentation
4 by the Government of Nunavut. I will ask our legal
5 counsel to swear or affirm the presenters and mark the
6 exhibits.

7 Teresa.

8 Procedural Matters by Nunavut Impact Review Board Legal
9 Counsel

10 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Teresa
11 Meadows, legal counsel for the Nunavut Impact Review
12 Board.

13 If I can have the witnesses state and spell their
14 name for the record, please.

15 J. BULLER: Justin Buller for the
16 Government of Nunavut, J-U-S-T-I-N B-U-L-L-E-R.

17 THE CHAIR: Does the witness wish to be
18 sworn or affirmed?

19 J. BULLER: I will affirm.

20 J. BULLER, Affirmed

21 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Teresa
22 Meadows, legal counsel for the Nunavut Impact Review
23 Board.

24 So, Mr. Chair, I have four copies of the
25 presentation materials that will be presented by the
26 Government of Nunavut in English, Inuktitut,

1 Inuinnaqtun, and French, and I will be marking those as
2 the next four exhibits in the public hearing.

3 And that concludes my procedural matters,
4 Mr. Chair.

5 EXHIBIT 15 - Hard Copy PowerPoint
6 Presentation, NIRB Public Hearing for B2Gold
7 Nunavut's "Back River Energy Centre" Project
8 Proposal, Government of Nunavut (English)

9 EXHIBIT 16 - Hard Copy PowerPoint
10 Presentation, NIRB Public Hearing for B2Gold
11 Nunavut's "Back River Energy Centre" Project
12 Proposal, Government of Nunavut (Inuktitut)

13 EXHIBIT 17 - Hard Copy PowerPoint
14 Presentation, NIRB Public Hearing for B2Gold
15 Nunavut's "Back River Energy Centre" Project
16 Proposal, Government of Nunavut (Inuinnaqtun)

17 EXHIBIT 18 - Hard Copy PowerPoint
18 Presentation, NIRB Public Hearing for B2Gold
19 Nunavut's "Back River Energy Centre" Project
20 Proposal, Government of Nunavut (French)

21 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Teresa.

22 Government of Nunavut, you may proceed with your
23 presentation.

24 Presentation by Government of Nunavut

25 J. BULLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

26 Following the statements made by Nunavut Tunngavik

1 and the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, there's little
2 left to be said, but I would -- I would note our
3 appreciation for the Board in hosting and the
4 participants and intervenors for joining today.

5 Without your dedication and participation, the
6 Nunavut regulatory system could not be effective in
7 managing the development of projects and minimizing the
8 impacts to people, wildlife, and the environment.

9 So for our presentation, the Government of Nunavut
10 has its Katujjiluta mandate, which prioritizes
11 reinvesting in education and diversifying local
12 economies. The overall goal is to prepare Nunavummiut
13 for new and increasing economic opportunities in the
14 territory.

15 Also, within Parnautit, which is the Government of
16 Nunavut's mineral exploration and mining strategy,
17 we're seeking to balance economic development with
18 ensuring that environmental impacts from exploration
19 and mining are minimized to the extent possible and
20 those that remain are mitigated.

21 The Government of Nunavut is also mandated through
22 legislation to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat.

23 THE CHAIR: Excuse me. Before you carry
24 on, can you move your mic a little closer to you.

25 Thank you.

26 J. BULLER: Sure.

1 In a summary of the Government of Nunavut's public
2 engagement on this project to date, in June, government
3 staff attended board engagements in various
4 communities, including Kugaaruk, Taloyoak, and Gjoa
5 Haven. Throughout this process, the Government of
6 Nunavut has reviewed the written statements and
7 comments submitted to the impact review board.

8 We listened to the statements made by intervenors
9 and the public, both written and orally, and the
10 Government of Nunavut is committed to continue working
11 with other intervenors, particularly folks in
12 communities, hunters and trappers organizations,
13 hamlets, and other local organizations.

14 The Government of Nunavut includes community input
15 throughout our review process in addition to the
16 overarching mandates that apply to whole of government
17 across departments. We have a team of in-house
18 experts, scientists, consultants, and staff that review
19 materials provided by proponents and the Board. These
20 are approved through a multidepartmental
21 consensus-based committee, and this is passed on to the
22 board as a recommendation.

23 The proponent has provided all of this information
24 in greater detail. We understand that the Back River
25 project is now owned and operated by B2Gold Nunavut,
26 but the proposal before us includes construction and

1 operation of a range of features, notably an expansion
2 of the project development area; delivering and
3 installation of up to 13 wind turbines; ancillary
4 infrastructure, including access roads and transmission
5 lines; an electrical station, solar power and battery
6 array to support this infrastructure.

7 As part of this project, we're excited that there
8 is interest amongst communities in the energy centre,
9 that it represents an opportunity to reduce the
10 reliance on diesel oil -- diesel fuel and other
11 petroleum products, and that this new industry has the
12 opportunity to provide educational training and
13 employment opportunities and jobs in this alternative
14 energy industry.

15 As I mentioned earlier, this is also an exciting
16 opportunity to demonstrate a large-scale wind farm in
17 Nunavut and show the potential to reduce CO2 emissions
18 within the territory.

19 We would note that Sabina has reported -- or
20 excuse me -- B2Gold Nunavut has reported strong
21 employment growth in 2022 after the pandemic, which was
22 also accompanied by a rise in Nunavut employment at the
23 site, a trend that we are hopeful will continue, and
24 that there are opportunities for additional training,
25 transferrable skills, and labour diversification, which
26 is important throughout the territory, and we recognize

1 that there's a desire amongst Kitikmeot especially to
2 access this benefit for this project.

3 In reviewing the project materials, the GN put
4 together -- the Government of Nunavut put together five
5 technical review comments that related to the potential
6 for caribou to be attracted to wind turbine generators
7 in the project development site. This was later
8 expanded to include consideration for avoidance and
9 deflection behaviour.

10 There was a comment about the size and power
11 analysis and a statistical approach to be able to
12 detect impacts related to caribou behaviour. There was
13 an interest in bird baseline surveys prior to
14 construction as well as the protection of nests through
15 construction and operation and re-evaluating bird
16 mortality and monitoring as well as a threshold
17 associated with that.

18 Over the last several months, we've been able to
19 resolve all five of the Government of Nunavut's
20 technical comments. Through the caribou technical
21 advisory group and direct conversations with the
22 proponent, we've seen a revision to the wildlife
23 mitigation and monitoring program plan referred to as
24 Appendix A to the proposal, the energy centre
25 mitigation monitoring.

26 This document was a much-needed addition that

1 reflected a better and more clear understanding of the
2 proponent's approach to monitoring and mitigating
3 project impacts associated with the energy centre
4 proposal specifically.

5 This was information that was generally lacking
6 during the prehearing conference and through consistent
7 cooperation in collaboration with the proponent and the
8 caribou technical advisory group. This material was
9 developed and reviewed prior to the final hearing
10 today.

11 The additions to the wildlife mitigation and
12 monitoring plan are a big step forward. They
13 articulate how the proponent will be addressing the
14 specific impacts related to the energy centre project,
15 but this is not a completed wildlife mitigation
16 monitoring plan.

17 Additional technical details remain to be
18 resolved, and the proponent has committed to developing
19 and finalizing this plan by consensus at the caribou
20 technical advisory group as a prerequisite for
21 construction of any approved wind farm components.

22 Due to the relationship between some of our
23 concerns at the caribou technical advisory group and
24 the overlapping mandate with Environment and Climate
25 Change Canada as it relates to birds, that federal
26 department will be invited to participate in

1 discussions related to bird mitigation and monitoring.

2 We would note that the ability for the caribou
3 technical advisory group to discuss and finalize the
4 monitoring plan by consensus as a prerequisite of
5 construction is an important shift in the way that
6 these technical groups are operating in Nunavut. It
7 empowers these groups to work collaboratively together
8 to resolve issues and supports good faith negotiations
9 amongst the members.

10 To conclude, I would reiterate that the Government
11 of Nunavut has resolved all five of its technical
12 review comments as it relates to the proposal. We
13 appreciate the efforts made by the proponent to work
14 with us and the other -- and the Kitikmeot Inuit
15 Association as members of the caribou technical
16 advisory group to resolve our issues generally.

17 We also recognize the effort by the proponent to
18 reduce its impact and use of petroleum products and to
19 advance renewable energy resources and projects for
20 their operation.

21 We will continue to work with the proponent and
22 regional stakeholders and our partners at the caribou
23 technical advisory group to address any outstanding
24 socioeconomic or ecosystemic concerns, and we'll
25 continue to work with the Board in any of its impact
26 assessment processes.

1 And that's it. Thank you. Quana. If you have
2 any further questions for the Government of Nunavut
3 after this hearing, please feel free to get in touch.

4 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Government of
5 Nunavut.

6 Now, any questions on the presentation.
7 Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

8 D. FREDLUND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
9 Dustin Fredlund.

10 We have no questions at this time for the
11 Government of Nunavut. Quana.

12 THE CHAIR: Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

13 J. EETOOLOOK: James Eetoolook, Kitikmeot
14 Inuit Association.

15 At this moment we don't have any questions to the
16 Government of Nunavut. Thank you very much.

17 THE CHAIR: Government of Northwest
18 Territories online.

19 J. HODSON: James Hodson with the
20 Government of the Northwest Territories.

21 No questions. Thank you.

22 THE CHAIR: Crown-Indigenous Relations and
23 Northern Affairs Canada.

24 S. DEWAR: Quana, Mr. Chair.
25 Spencer Dewar.

26 On behalf of the Government of Canada, there's no

1 questions at this time. Thank you.

2 THE CHAIR: Health Canada.

3 C. DUTCHAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Cassidy

4 Dutchak, Health Canada.

5 No questions.

6 THE CHAIR: Transport Canada.

7 S. KIDD: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

8 Scott Kidd for Transport Canada.

9 I have no questions for the Government of Nunavut.

10 Thank you.

11 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

12 M. KEEFE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

13 Merle Keefe, B2Gold.

14 We have no questions. Thank you.

15 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board
16 staff.

17 T. ARKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

18 Tara Arko, Nunavut Impact Review Board staff.

19 No questions at this time.

20 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board.

21 Guy.

22 Nunavut Impact Review Board Questions B2Gold

23 Corporation

24 G. ALIKUT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm

25 Guy Alikut, Nunavut Impact Review Board member.

26 It's not directly -- it's not a question directly

1 to the Government of Nunavut, but I wanted to comment
2 about the youth that will be in the generations to
3 come. It's very difficult today when we're in -- I
4 know that maybe I may be off on a tangent a bit, but we
5 have to remember that it's very -- it becomes very
6 difficult for the youth and younger people to be able
7 to make ends meet because of the high cost of living,
8 the high cost of food. It's not really -- it's not a
9 good thing to see. We need to see more socioeconomic
10 opportunities for the youth. I've been with the Board
11 for 13 years, and this is more and more evident today.
12 Sometimes it is a depressing thought, but I have to say
13 it because it -- it's a reality. Thank you.

14 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

15 Government of Nunavut.

16 J. BULLER: Justin Buller for the
17 Government of Nunavut.

18 Thank you, Guy, for your comment. I think it's a
19 sentiment that is shared by many across the territory,
20 and it's something that the Government of Nunavut is
21 attempting to address through its various mandates
22 whether that be focusing on additional training
23 opportunities and its work with the arctic college or
24 working to expand mineral opportunities. It's -- it's
25 definitely a challenge, so I appreciate you bringing it
26 up here in this context. It's something that I think

1 we're all working to try to find a solution to.

2 Thank you.

3 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board.

4 Guy.

5 G. ALIKUT: Mr. Chairman. That's all the
6 questions I have. Thank you.

7 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

8 Now we'll finish off the agenda for today with
9 Item 5.4, the Government of the Northwest Territories.

10 Teresa, can you proceed with procedural matters
11 for its presenter.

12 Procedural Matters by Nunavut Impact Review
13 Board Legal Counsel

14 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15 Teresa Meadows, legal counsel for the Nunavut Impact
16 Review Board.

17 If I can have the witness state and spell his name
18 for the record.

19 J. HODSON: Thank you.

20 My name is James Hodson, J-A-M-E-S H-O-D-S-O-N.

21 T. MEADOWS: Teresa Meadows --

22 J. HODSON: And I also have Jan
23 Adamczewski. Sorry.

24 T. MEADOWS: Oh, my apologies.

25 There's someone else also presenting?

26 J. HODSON: Yeah. I'll just ask Jan to

1 introduce himself and spell his name.

2 J. ADAMCZEWSKI: Good afternoon.

3 Jan Adamczewski. I'm a biologist with GNWT in
4 Yellowknife.

5 I'll spell my name. First name Jan, J-A-N. Last
6 name, Adamczewski, is A-D-A-M-C-Z-E-W-S-K-I.

7 T. MEADOWS: Teresa Meadows, legal counsel
8 for the Nunavut Impact Review Board. If I can have the
9 witnesses affirm.

10 JAMES HODSON, JAN ADAMCZEWSKI, Affirmed

11 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12 Teresa Meadows, legal counsel for the Nunavut Impact
13 Review Board.

14 Mr. Chair, we have the presentation materials that
15 were provided by the Government of the Northwest
16 Territories in English, Inuktitut, and Inuinnaqtun, and
17 I will be marking those as the next three exhibits in
18 the public hearing. And those are my procedural
19 matters, Mr. Chair.

20 EXHIBIT 19 - Electronic Copy PowerPoint
21 Presentation, Sabina Gold and Silver
22 Corp./B2Gold Nunavut's Back River Energy
23 Centre Proposal, Government of Northwest
24 Territories (English)

25 EXHIBIT 20 - Electronic Copy PowerPoint
26 Presentation, Sabina Gold and Silver

1 Corp./B2Gold Nunavut's Back River Energy
2 Centre Proposal, Government of Northwest
3 Territories (Inuktitut)
4 EXHIBIT 21 - Electronic Copy PowerPoint
5 Presentation, Sabina Gold and Silver
6 Corp./B2Gold Nunavut's Back River Energy
7 Centre Proposal, Government of Northwest
8 Territories (Inuinnaqtun)

9 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Teresa.
10 Government of Northwest Territories. Can you
11 please proceed with your presentation.

12 J. HODSON: Yes. Thank you.

13 Just a technical question. Do I need to share my
14 screen for the presentation?

15 THE CHAIR: Teresa.

16 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17 Teresa Meadows, legal counsel for the Nunavut Impact
18 Review Board. My apologies for the delay. I was just
19 checking to see what's possible.

20 So -- yes. Mr. Hodson, if you can share your
21 screen, we will be able to see it here.

22 J. HODSON: Okay. All right. Just one
23 second. Okay. Can you see the presentation mode now?

24 T. MEADOWS: Thank you, Mr. Hodson.

25 Yes. We can see the presentation mode being
26 projected.

1 J. HODSON: Okay. Thank you.
2 Presentation by Government of the Northwest Territories
3 (Sabina Gold and Silver Corp./B2Gold Nunavut's Back
4 River Energy Centre Proposal)

5 J. HODSON: So, yes, my name is
6 James Hodson. I'm the manager of the habitat and
7 environmental assessment section of the wildlife
8 management division within the department of
9 environment and climate change at the GNWT. And with
10 me today is Jan Adamczewski, ungulate biologist, also
11 with wildlife management division.

12 My presentation today will provide a high-level
13 overview of GNWT's role in caribou monitoring and
14 management, how GNWT participated in the Back River
15 energy project review process, a summary of technical
16 comments submitted by GNWT, and how Sabina -- or B2Gold
17 addressed our comments through follow-up discussions
18 leading to further commitments from the proponent.

19 Okay. So the GNWT department of environment and
20 climate change's overarching role with respect to
21 wildlife and the environment is to try and manage these
22 resources for social and economic benefit of all NWT
23 residents while maintaining ecosystem health.

24 With respect to caribou, GNWT-ECC works with
25 other territorial and federal governments, Indigenous
26 governments and Indigenous organizations, and wildlife

1 co-management boards to develop and implement
2 monitoring and management programs.

3 For example, GNWT-ECC participates on the Beverly
4 and Qamanirjuaq caribou management board which advises
5 on the conservation and management of these herds
6 throughout their ranges and four jurisdictions.

7 THE CHAIR: Excuse me. Can you slow down
8 a bit. Thank you.

9 J. HODSON: Yes. Sorry.

10 GNWT-ECC collaborates with the Government of
11 Nunavut in surveys to determine population status and
12 distribution of some shared herds including the Beverly
13 and Bathurst herds.

14 Sorry. I forgot to advance the slide.

15 GNWT worked with many of its caribou co-management
16 partners on the development of the Bathurst caribou
17 range plan which was finalized in 2019. The goal of
18 the range plan is to help ensure the integrity of
19 important habitats, maintain connectivity between
20 seasonal ranges, keep human-caused land disturbance
21 below certain levels, and ensure that roads are
22 designed and used with consideration to caribou.

23 GNWT's concerns on the Back River energy project
24 were guided by and intended to be consistent with the
25 Bathurst range plan.

26 So barren-ground caribou are designated as

1 threatened by both the federal Committee on the Status
2 of Endangered Wildlife in Canada in December 2016 and
3 by the NWT Conference of Management Authorities in
4 February 2018.

5 Barren-ground caribou, with the exception of the
6 Porcupine caribou herd, were added to the NWT list of
7 species at risk in July 2018, and the NWT recovery
8 strategy was finalized in 2020.

9 Adding barren-ground caribou to the federal list
10 of species at risk is still under consideration. The
11 Bathurst and Beverly barren-ground caribou herds are
12 most likely to interact with the Back River energy
13 project. The Bathurst herd is shown in green on the
14 map, its calving grounds are just west of
15 Bathurst Inlet in Nunavut, and this herd is shared
16 between the NWT and Inuit.

17 GNWT has the lead responsibility for monitoring
18 the status of the Bathurst herd. Calving-ground photo
19 surveys have been used for this herd since the 1980s.
20 From a high of 470,000 caribou estimated in 1986, the
21 herd has declined more than 98 percent to the most
22 recent estimate of 6,800 in 2022. There are three
23 active diamond mines and a winter road in the Bathurst
24 caribou's range, and other roads and mines are
25 proposed.

26 Hunter harvest of the Bathurst herd was restricted

1 in 2010 in the NWT by more than 90 percent to about
2 300 caribou per year and mostly bulls. Harvest of the
3 herd in the NWT was closed in 2015 following further
4 decline in the herd. There is a harvest of ten bulls
5 per year from this herd in Nunavut, and that harvest is
6 for subsistence only.

7 The Beverly herd was estimated at 104,000 in 2018
8 and was thought to be slowly declining at that time. A
9 new survey was flown in June 2023 by the Government of
10 Nunavut, but the results are not yet available. Note
11 there is an additional calving ground for the Beverly
12 herd south of the one with the Beverly label on the
13 map. This calving ground was used until about 2010 but
14 not since that time.

15 The Beverly herd's range is fairly large, and in
16 recent years, much of the herd has wintered in the NWT.
17 Currently there are no harvest restrictions for this
18 herd given that it is still relatively large in size.
19 In recent winters, a portion of the Beverly herd has
20 been accessible in the NWT from the winter roads to the
21 diamond mines.

22 Technical monitoring of this herd is shared
23 between the Government of -- Government of Nunavut
24 which flies the population surveys and the GNWT which
25 places collars on this herd and flies composition
26 surveys that provide additional information like

1 calf-cow ratios.

2 GNWT has participated in previous reviews of the
3 Back River mine project conducted between 2013 to 2017.
4 GNWT submitted technical comments on the Back River
5 energy centre proposal in June 2023.

6 After B2Gold responded to GNWT's comments in
7 writing in June 2023, they reached out to GNWT to
8 request a follow-up meeting to discuss whether GNWT's
9 comments and recommendations had been addressed.

10 GNWT met with the representatives from B2Gold on
11 September 22nd, 2023, to discuss our technical
12 comments. This led to two new commitments from B2Gold
13 which will be outlined later in the presentation.

14 GNWT's technical comments were framed by the
15 overarching concern that the Bathurst and Beverly
16 caribou -- caribou herds are highly vulnerable and that
17 actions from the project could pose a risk of further
18 decline and delayed recovery that need to be carefully
19 considered.

20 Our first technical comment focused on noise
21 monitoring of the wind turbines. GNWT was concerned
22 that B2Gold's noise assessment was based on comparing
23 noise produced by the turbines to noise guidelines for
24 human receptors whereas recent research has shown that
25 caribou detect noises at lower frequencies than humans
26 and that caribou may detect noise from the turbines

1 beyond the thresholds of 1 kilometre and 1.4 kilometres
2 used in the tiered mitigation response described in the
3 wildlife plan.

4 GNWT recommended that noise monitoring be extended
5 as described in Section 7.2.2.5 of the wildlife
6 management mitigation protection plan to reduce noise
7 disturbance from wind turbines.

8 We recommended that results of the noise
9 monitoring should be compared against noise audible by
10 caribou, and if noise produced by the wind turbines can
11 be perceived by caribou past the 1 kilometre and
12 1.4 kilometre thresholds, the tiered mitigation
13 response should be revised to reflect this new
14 information.

15 GNWT's second set of technical comments focused on
16 monitoring the zone of influence of the wind turbines.
17 GNWT highlighted that there is little information on
18 the impact of wind turbines on caribou in North
19 America, but recent studies from Sweden found that
20 reindeer movements can be affected within 2 to
21 5 kilometres of wind farms. GNWT recommended that
22 Sabina conduct the ZOI, or zone of influence, analysis
23 separately for the modification project description
24 area and the Goose site rather than conducting the
25 analysis together.

26 And if the zone of influence analysis determines

1 that caribou are avoiding the wind turbines, more --

2 THE CHAIR: Excuse me. Can you slow down
3 and pause between sentences? Thank you.

4 J. HODSON: Yeah. Sorry. I'll -- I'll
5 start the last one again.

6 So GNWT's second part of that recommendation was
7 that if the zone of influence analysis determines that
8 caribou are avoiding the wind turbines more than
9 initially predicted in the FEIS, the tiered mitigation
10 response should be revised to reflect this new
11 information.

12 So after a meeting with B2Gold in September 2023,
13 B2Gold made the following commitments: With respect to
14 noise monitoring of wind turbines, B2Gold committed to
15 collect and evaluate the noise from the wind towers,
16 (a), in the first year of operation; (b), in the
17 audible range of caribou; and, (c), to link this to
18 adaptive management.

19 With respect to the zone of influence of the wind
20 turbines, B2Gold committed to -- made the following two
21 statements. First, B2Gold stated they understand the
22 importance in evaluating the response of caribou to the
23 wind towers separately from the mine site.

24 However, they also recognize the challenges in
25 doing so due to the close proximity of the two. B2Gold
26 committed to continue to update the analyses specific

1 to this and the design of the monitoring programs in
2 consultation with the caribou technical advisory group.
3 They committed to sharing the details of the study
4 design with the GNWT in advance of implementation for
5 GNWT's review and feedback.

6 GNWT was satisfied with the commitments made by
7 B2Gold at the September 2023 meeting. GNWT considers
8 the two issues raised in their technical review
9 comments to be resolved. GNWT looks forward to
10 reviewing an updated version of the wildlife plan that
11 includes further details outlining how B2Gold's two
12 commitments will be implemented.

13 So we'd like to say thank you, again, for the
14 opportunity to present today, and we are happy to
15 answer any questions that you may have. Thank you.

16 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Government of
17 Northwest Territories, for your presentation.

18 Now, any questions about the presentation.
19 Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

20 D. FREDLUND: Quana, Ihivautaq.

21 I don't have any questions at the moment. Thank
22 you.

23 THE CHAIR: Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

24 J. EETOOLOOK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25 No, we don't have any questions. Thank you.

26 THE CHAIR: Government of Nunavut.

1 J. BULLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2 No questions on the Government of Nunavut.

3 Thanks, James, to your -- for your presentation.

4 THE CHAIR: Crown-Indigenous Relations and
5 Northern Affairs Canada.

6 S. DEWAR: Quana, Mr. Chair.

7 Spencer Dewar.

8 The Government of Canada has no questions. Thank
9 you.

10 THE CHAIR: Health Canada?

11 C. DUTCHAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Cassidy
12 Dutchak, Health Canada.

13 No questions.

14 THE CHAIR: Transport Canada?

15 S. KIDD: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16 Scott Kidd for Transport Canada.

17 I have no questions for the Government of the
18 Northwest Territories. Thank you.

19 THE CHAIR: B2Gold.

20 M. KEEFE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

21 Merle Keefe, B2Gold.

22 We have no questions.

23 THE CHAIR: Nunavut Impact Review Board
24 staff.

25 T. ARKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

26 Tara Arko, Nunavut Impact Review Board staff.

1 No questions at this time.

2 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

3 Nunavut Impact Review Board members have no
4 questions.

5 That concludes Day 1 of the technical discussions.
6 Thank you, all, for your contributions to a productive
7 day.

8 We'll be meeting back here at 9 AM to start Day 2
9 of the technical sessions with the intervenor
10 presentations, and we will then move into the community
11 roundtable session.

12 Just a reminder that tomorrow we'll be having a
13 scheduled evening session between 6:30 and 9 PM.

14 Before leaving, please return your headsets to the
15 front desk, and we will prepare for some door prizes.

16 How many? How many? Last three numbers: 690,
17 689. 705.

18 Thank you, everyone. I hope you have a good
19 night. And we'll see you in the morning.

20

21 PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED UNTIL 9:00 AM, FEBRUARY 28, 2024

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1 CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIPT:

2

3 I, Derek Lopez and Andres Vidal, certify that the
4 foregoing pages are a complete and accurate transcript
5 of the proceedings taken down by me in shorthand and
6 transcribed from my shorthand notes to the best of my
7 skill and ability.

8 Dated at the City of Calgary, Province of Alberta,
9 this 10th day of March 2023.

10

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12



13

D. Lopez, CSR(A), RPR

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Official Court Reporter

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A. Vidal, CSR(A), RPR, RMR

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Official Court Reporter

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