CIRNAC Comments to NIRB

Re: Notice of Screening for Carleton University's "Co-evolution of Life and Environment Across the Ediacaran-Cambrian Boundary in Northeastern Ellesmere Island" Project Proposal

Nunavut Regional Office
918 Sivumugiaq Street
Iqaluit, NU, X0A 3H0

Your file - Votre référence
26YN017
Our file - Notre référence
GCdocs# 145672862

May 1, 2026

Dustin Sim
Screening Officer
Nunavut Impact Review Board
P.O. Box 1360
Cambridge Bay, NU, X0B 0C0
via NIRB public registry

Re: Notice of Screening and Comment Request for Carleton University's "Co-evolution of Life and Environment Across the Ediacaran-Cambrian Boundary in Northeastern Ellesmere Island" Project Proposal

Dear Dustin Sim,

On April 10, 2026, the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) invited parties to comment on Carleton University's "Co-evolution of life and environment across the Ediacaran-Cambrian boundary in Northeastern Ellesmere Island" project proposal. Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments and offers the responses below as it pertains to the NIRB's request:

Any matter of importance to the Party related to the project proposal

CIRNAC #1: Land Status and Required Authorizations

The application identifies the project locations as Crown land; however, the application does not indicate whether any additional land access, occupancy, or use authorizations are required for the temporary camps and associated field activities. CIRNAC recommends that the Proponent confirm whether any such authorizations are required and obtain them prior to commencing activities.

CIRNAC #2: Temporary Camp Siting and Restoration

The application describes temporary camps and asserts a "strict zero-footprint policy"; however, the application does not describe camp micro-siting criteria, restoration practices, or camp operational measures to minimize wildlife interactions and manage attractants. Given the remote Arctic setting on Ellesmere Island, the use of temporary camps over an extended field period, and the potential presence of polar bears and other wildlife, additional detail would assist in understanding how camp-related environmental and safety risks will be managed. Temporary camps should be located on durable surfaces (e.g., gravel, sand, or other stable land), footprints

should be minimized, and clean-up/restoration should occur prior to the end of the field season and/or upon abandonment. CIRNAC recommends that the Proponent considers:

- Siting camps on durable land and minimizing the camp footprint;
- Storing food, waste, and other attractants securely, and implementing camp housekeeping, personnel awareness, and wildlife encounter response procedures to reduce the likelihood and consequences of wildlife interactions;
- Locating camp to reduce the likelihood of interfering with wildlife movement areas or travel corridors;
- Completing clean-up and restoration of the camp site prior to the end of the field season and/or upon abandonment; and
- Ensuring any disturbed areas (including any rutting or gouging if it occurs) are restored to a stable state upon completion of field activities.

CIRNAC #3: Greywater Management

The Proponent proposes a temporary camp and indicates pack-out of certain wastes, including non-combustible waste (3 kg), used fuel cans, and human waste (22.5 kg). However, the application does not describe how greywater (kitchen/handwashing wastewater) will be managed. Mismanagement of grey water is a key camp-related pathway for land and water contamination. Given the planned duration (25 days onsite), the absence of greywater management detail is a notable gap. CIRNAC recommends that the Proponent considers:

- Managing greywater as per temporary camp best practices (e.g., removing food particles to the extent possible before disposal);
- Using an approved greywater management method suitable to site conditions (e.g., contained collection, sump where appropriate, or pack-out if required); and
- Locating greywater management practices to reduce the likelihood of discharge reaching nearby waterbodies.

CIRNAC appreciates the opportunity to provide comments. Should you have any questions, please contact Muhammad Arslan by e-mail at muhammad.arslan@rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca or David Abernethy by email at david.abernethy@rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca.

Sincerely,

Richard Bingley
Manager, Impact Assessment