

HAMLET OF ARCTIC BAY WORKING GROUP
SUBMISSION TO THE NUNAVUT WATER BOARD
JULY 22, 2002

My name is Joanasie Akumalik I am the Mayor of the Hamlet of Arctic Bay. Today I speak to you representing my community and all the members of the Hamlet Working Group, and people in the community of Arctic Bay in general, who are concerned about the closure of the Nanisivik mine. That working group has representatives from the Elders, the youth, the women, the HTO and the political leadership of our community.

The people representing these groups and myself have all signed this paper. I am reading this to you and then you can consider it part of your official records.

I would like to begin by telling you all a story.

In the middle of June 1974 two Inuit men from our community were invited to a party. One of those men was Issiah Attagutsiak. He was my uncle. The other was Levi Kudlook. He was the mayor.

Neither of them could read or understand English. They thought they were going to a dance and to have some food. When they got to the party they were asked to sign a paper agreeing to something. They did not know what they were agreeing to.

The document they were agreeing to was signed by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development at that time and the President of Mineral Resources International Limited. It created a mine called Nanisivik Mines Ltd.

The document they agreed to is called the Strathcona Agreement.

That Minister is now the Prime Minister of Canada – the right Hon. Jean Chretien. They were told at the time that the agreement they agreed to at that long ago party, would be translated into Inuktitut and provided to them.

Nobody in our community has ever seen a translated copy of the Strathcona Agreement.

Today 28 years later we are talking about the closure of the same mine.

We do not know how much the company has made from ore from the mine over those 28 years. We do not know how much the Government of Canada has received from mineral royalties over those years. We do not know how much the Government of Canada, the Government of Northwest Territories and now since 1999, the Government of Nunavut, has spent on infrastructure in Nanisivik

townsite in the past 28 years. All we know is that Arctic Bay did not receive many of the benefits that the Nanisivik townsite received.

We do know that when houses were moved to Arctic Bay from Nanisivik a few years ago, that they were in good condition and they were in much better shape than much of the housing here in Arctic Bay.

We understand that the Water Board hearing is caused by a water license application for closure. We know that there are other agencies that have responsibility for looking at the other impacts from the closure of this mine, including impacts on wildlife, and impacts on the social and economic conditions in this area, and that they will be closely listening to what happens here today.

Please keep mind that we and our children will be the ones who will be left here and we will live with the legacy of the mine. It is very important to ensure that the legacy looks far into the future.

There are two sections to my presentation here today. The first has to do with environmental cleanup concerns and the second has to do with other concerns.

Environmental cleanup concerns: Our people are part of the environment. The environment includes the whole ecosystem. This includes the air, the water on the land, the sea, the land itself, the animals, birds and plants. We are dependent on these things in our environment in order to survive.

The mine will close Sept. 30 and then the cleanup will begin. We have these concerns about the cleanup.

- The tailings area at the West Twin lakes will be covered over. It is a liquid area. How can we insure it does not leak when it is covered in? What happens if the ground warms up and the permafrost melts?
- The pipeline carrying material from the mill to the tailings pond has broken several times. How are the various places where it busted and spilled tailings, going to be cleaned up?
- The landfill site contains what we understand is many barrels- possibly 2,000- containing oil and possibly other things? How will this be kept from leaking into the water and into the sound?
- The wind has blown mine materials around? How will you find where these wind blown tailings are and how will you make sure they are cleaned up?
- The site will need to be monitored for many, many years. We believe it should be for at least ten years. In the past we know that there was monitoring happening of the water and the tailings pond and even the air. We have also been aware of tailings monitoring devices that have not worked for long periods of time. We have not received the results from these activities. It is important that the local people in Arctic Bay become

fully involved in this long term monitoring work and be trained to undertake this activity. It is important that the local people trust the results of these activities.

- We would like to see as many Arctic Bay people as possible employed during the cleanup activities.
- How the environmental cleanup work is done will impact us for a very long time. It will impact my children and my children's children long into the future..many generations. This will be the environmental legacy of this mine. Please understand you have a responsibility to make very wise decisions about the future of my children and my children's children. If you make the wrong decisions many of you will not be impacted. We will.

Other concerns: I would now like to speak about the legacy of this mine from a different view. There are many structures associated with this mine. They include the housing, equipment and facilities in the townsite, the airport and air service, the dock and the roads.

We would like to make these comments about this infrastructure.

- There is mine housing, Nunavut Government housing and other housing in the townsite. If the plan is to get rid of any of this housing in the townsite we would like to see as much of it moved to Arctic Bay as possible. We have a severe housing shortage in Arctic Bay. When I go to Iqaluit and see all that brand new housing on top of hills much of it filled with government people and then I come here and look at the housing which is here- I see a very big difference.
- We heard the mine manager at the pre-hearing say that the mine has plans to provide everything in terms of equipment and materials they can to Arctic Bay. We need to make detailed arrangements on this between the Hamlet office and the mine and the Nunavut government where it is involved. Many of our people have said this before in the public meetings and I am saying it here again.
- There is equipment and materials that could be used by the youth of this community and by the women in this community and by many people in this community.
- From our point of view any materials and equipment that can be given to the people of Arctic Bay are materials and equipment that will not need to be buried or destroyed.
- We understand the dock is very important from a strategic view. It is the only deep water port in Nunavut. Cruise ships use this dock and the Coast Guard also use the dock. Cruise ship passengers land at the airport. The military has been here as well.

- Our air services have already been cutback with Kenn Borek air no longer flying here.
- The airport and roads to the dock and to Arctic Bay must be preserved in order for these long term economic developments to happen. The airport is also vital for transportation for the people of Arctic Bay. This is true in particular for dealing with medical emergencies.
- There are Arctic Bay people employed at the mine who live in the townsite. What is going to happen to them and their homes? There are about 15 local people working at the mine. On top of that we have at least 10 other jobs that are created as a result of the mine operations. Can you imagine what it means to Arctic Bay to lose 25 jobs that support people in this community. Can you imagine if at least 25% of the paying jobs in Iqaluit were wiped out?
- We believe that both the Government of Canada and Nunavut have a responsibility to look at the social and economic future and the long term use for some of this very important infrastructure

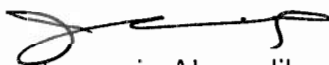
This is what I have to say to you today because I know that there are people here from the Governments of Canada and Nunavut, from NTI, from the Nunavut Impact Review Board as well as you, from the Water Board.

We know that this is a Water Board hearing but we also know that all of these other agencies have some responsibilities to the people of Arctic Bay. We want you to know that we know this.

I know that there are people here from the media.

When you leave our community on Wednesday I want you to understand how very important your decisions are and how they will impact us and our children and our children's children long into the future.

Thank you



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Mayor, Arctic Bay



Qavavaug Issugangitug
HTO

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