



NIRB File No.: 11MN034

May 31, 2012

To: Chris Hanks and Phase 2 Hope Bay Belt Distribution List
Vice President Environmental Affairs
Hope Bay Mining Ltd.
300-889 Harbourside Dr.
North Vancouver, BC V7P 3S1

Sent via email, fax and regular post

Re: Minister's Decision for Hope Bay Mining Ltd.'s "Phase 2 Hope Bay Belt" Project Proposal

Dear Chris Hanks and Parties:

On May 30, 2012 the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) received the enclosed letter from the Honourable John Duncan, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (the Minister), regarding the NIRB's February 24, 2012 Screening Decision Report for Hope Bay Mining Ltd.'s (HBML) "Phase 2 Hope Bay Belt" project proposal (NIRB File No. 12MN001). The Minister has accepted the Board's recommendation that the Phase 2 Hope Bay Belt project proposal requires a public review under Part 5 or 6 of Article 12 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA), determining that the project proposal shall be subject to Review by the NIRB in accordance with NLCA Article 12, Part 5.

Please be advised that the Minister's decision, as well as all information pertaining to the NIRB's Review of this project proposal is available online from the Board's public registry at the following location:

<http://ftp.nirb.ca/02-REVIEWS/ACTIVE%20REVIEWS/12MN001-HBML%20PHASE%202%20HOPE%20BAY%20BELT/>.

The Minister also provided specific responses to two of five issues that were set out in the NIRB's Screening Decision Report for this file as follows:

1. *Availability of participant funding* – The Minister stated that, while funding has been provided for a number of complex projects on a case-by-case basis in the past, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) does not have an established participant funding program in place for environmental assessments in Nunavut. As such, he was unable to provide participant funding for the Review of the Phase 2 Hope Bay Belt project proposal. Further, the Minister agreed that effective participation is important, and expressed confidence in the ability of the NIRB's Review process to

provide sufficient and meaningful opportunities for potentially affected groups to participate in the Review.

2. *Recent announcement regarding care and maintenance at Doris North* – The Minister noted that while the establishment of certainty with respect to start-up timelines of resource development projects may be difficult, he expected the review to continue as long as HBML is actively engaged in the review process and information requirements can be met.

The Minister further agreed with the NIRB's recommendation that the issues related to acid rock drainage and metal leaching, tailings management, and cumulative impacts are important and should be considered during the Review of this project.

Finally, the Minister also acknowledged that the flexibility of the NIRB's Review process should allow for the NIRB to assign priority status to other projects currently undergoing assessment which may have more immediate time frames. With this in mind, the NIRB will provide all parties with direction for the initial steps in the Review process, including an anticipated Review timeline and draft scope for the Review within the coming week.

In closing, the Board requests that all parties review the attached Phase 2 Hope Bay Belt project specific distribution list (Appendix A) and notify the NIRB's staff via email at info@nirb.ca or via fax at (867) 983-2594 should any additions or changes be required.

Should you have any questions regarding the NIRB's Review of the Phase 2 Hope Bay Belt project, please contact Amanda Hanson, NIRB's Director of Technical Services, at ahanson@nirb.ca or (867) 983-4615.

Sincerely,



Ryan Barry
Executive Director
Nunavut Impact Review Board

cc: Honourable John Duncan, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
Honourable Keith Ashfield, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Honourable Joe Oliver, Minister of Natural Resources
Honourable Denis Lebel, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
Charlie Evalik, President of the Kitikmeot Inuit Association

Attachment: Appendix A: Phase 2 Hope Bay Belt Project Distribution List

Enclosure: Minister of AAND Decision Re: HBML's Phase 2 Hope Bay Belt Project (May 30, 2012; NIRB File No. 12MN001)

APPENDIX A

DISTRIBUTION LIST FOR THE NIRB'S REVIEW OF THE PHASE 2 HOPE BAY BELT PROJECT

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