



Fisheries and Oceans
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Your file *Votre référence*

Our file *Notre référence*

NU-02-0117

December 20, 2005

Mr. David Long
Miramar Mining Corporation
300 – 889 Harbourside Drive
North Vancouver, British Columbia
V7P 3S1

via e-mail: dlong@miramarmining.com

Dear Mr. Long,

In follow-up to our telephone conversation yesterday, I am writing on behalf of both Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and Environment Canada (EC) to clarify our requirements for the alternatives assessment conducted for the tailings disposal alternatives for the proposed Doris North project. In response to the conformity review conducted by the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB), Miramar Hope Bay Ltd. (MHBL) submitted an *Environmental Impact Statement Supplement* (dated November 15, 2005), which stated that additional information related to environmental and social considerations would be incorporated into the tailings alternative assessment for the proposed Doris North project. This additional information was to be provided after the public consultation sessions were held in late November. In order to assist MHBL in incorporating this information into the tailings alternative assessment, DFO and EC are pleased to provide the following advice for your consideration.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Doris North Gold project has identified Tail Lake as the preferred location for the storage of tailings. The baseline fisheries studies have identified Lake trout and Ninespine stickleback as inhabiting Tail Lake and it is therefore considered to be a fish frequented natural waterbody. As a result, the use of Tail Lake for the deposit of tailings will require that this lake be listed under Schedule 2 of the *Metal Mining Effluent Regulations* (MMER) of the *Fisheries Act*. This means that the MMER will need to be amended which requires approval by Governor-in-Council. The deposition of tailings into Tail Lake can not occur until the lake is listed under Schedule 2.

Prior to recommending that the Regulations be amended, the environmental assessment of the project (i.e. NIRB review) will need to conclude that there will be no significant adverse environmental effects. Furthermore, as part of the scheduling process, Cabinet will require that alternatives to amending the Regulations be presented (i.e. other options to depositing tailings in fish-bearing waterbodies). Therefore, it will be necessary to ensure that the tailings impoundment area (TIA) Alternatives Assessment is rigorous and thorough enough for both the environmental assessment phase as well as the scheduling process. Furthermore, it should be noted that the scheduling process will be subject to public consultation on a National level.

With the hope of ensuring that all the necessary information is contained within the EIS alternatives assessment for tailings disposal options, DFO and EC request that the forthcoming submission incorporating environmental and social considerations into the TIA alternatives assessment include and/or address the following issues.

- Environmental and social considerations should be incorporated into the alternatives assessment to provide a rationale for the decision to exclude various options and support the preferred option. The complete analysis should discuss potential environmental effects of each alternative on the Valued Ecosystem Components (VECs) that were identified for the project.
- An explanation should be provided on how the environmental, social, technical and economic criteria were applied to the alternatives, along with appropriate justification on how ranking was achieved. Ranking the alternatives presumes some level of quantitative assessment. This assessment should be explained in the EIS.
- In the Final EIS, section 3, page 3-4 several alternatives are ranked according to environmental risk factors. Please explain what environmental risk factors were considered and include all alternatives that were considered in the ranking.

As MHBL has stated in their EIS, the Doris North project is proposed to have a two (2) year mine life. In completing the assessment of the alternatives to tailings disposal, MHBL should keep this project scope in mind. Since the impact assessments associated with the construction, operation and closure of the tailings impoundment area have been limited to the scope of a two year mine life, the primary focus of the alternatives assessment should be limited to the two year mine life as well.

I trust this is helpful in the completion of the alternatives assessment for the Doris North Project. Given the upcoming public hearings for the Doris North Project, it would be beneficial to all parties to receive the revised TIA alternatives assessment as soon as possible so it can be reviewed prior to participation in the hearings. If you or any of your staff have questions or would like clarification on any of these issues please contact Colette Spagnuolo of Environment Canada at 867-975-4639, or Tania Gordanier of Fisheries & Oceans Canada at 867-979-8007.

Regards,

Original Signed By:

Tania Gordanier
Habitat Management Biologist
Fisheries & Oceans Canada

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