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Avatiliqiyikkut

Department of Environment

Ministère de l'Environnement

Stephanie Briscoe
Executive Director
Nunavut Impact Review Board
PO Box 2379
Cambridge Bay
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XOB OCO

July 4, 2005

Dear Stephanie

DORIS NORTH GOLD MINE COMFORMITY REVIEW

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the conformity review for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) submitted by Miramar Hope Bay Limited (MHBL) for the Doris North Project.

In undertaking this review the Department of Environment (DOE) has compared the DEIS with the NIRB guidelines, in order to make an assessment of conformity. We would like to point out that DOE has not had time to fully review the technical information contained in the supplementary documents, received on June 20, 2005 from MHBL. We believe the review of this supplementary information to be part of the more technically focused deficiency review, due on a later date to be determined by NIRB.

DOE's Conformity table is attached for NIRB's attention. We consider that the DEIS submitted by MHBL **does not** conform to all the guidelines prepared by NIRB. Consequently, we request that MHBL be given chance to respond to conformity issues before proceeding with the deficiency review. This will ensure that interested parties have the full information on which to base their deficiency comments.

DOE would like to draw NIRB's attention to some specific issues where we believe the DEIS does not conform to the guidelines, these are as follows:

Tail Lake

DOE has concerns about the possibility of groundwater contamination from the tailings lake. There appears to be no information on the possibility of tailings contaminating groundwater through taliks and fissures below the lake.

Groundwater

No information can be found that determines rate or direction of groundwater flow at the site, and the subsequent impacts on water balance. We recognise that assumptions are made that groundwater intrusion to the tailings facility and mine workings will be negligible, however, there is no baseline information or assessment of this impact.

Regulatory Regime

It is not clear from reviewing the documents that GN Regulations and various Guidelines have been fully taken into consideration, in particular the following (which are available upon request):

- o GN Regulation 'Spill Contingency Planning and Reporting'
- Spill Contingency Planning & Spill Reporting in Nunavut: A guide to the New Regulations
- o GN Guideline 'General Management of Hazardous Wastes'
- GN Guideline 'Contaminated Site Remediation'
- GN Guideline 'Dust Suppression'

Management plans

The NIRB guidelines call for the development of practical management plans for environment protection. With the exception of Wildlife Mitigation and Monitoring Plan and the Emergency Response and Contingency plans, no such plans exist. Currently management actions are scattered throughout the documents and need to be drawn together into coherent documents.

Chapter 5 of the Technical Report lists numerous plans, including Environment Protection Plans that will be developed, but it appears that these are currently conceptual.

Monitoring Plans

It is recognised that MHBL have developed an Effluent and Aquatic Monitoring Plan, however, this monitoring plan, needs feedback to inform adaptive management. If monitoring demonstrates non-compliance or that water quality differs from predictions, then action must be taken. Adaptive management does not currently form part of this plan.

The DOE reserves the right to provide further technical input into the review of the DEIS for the Doris North Gold Mine Project at a later date.

We are mindful of the timelines indicated by NIRB in their letter dated June 17 2005 and we will strive to provide NIRB with timely advice. However, we would like NIRB to recognise that the review of such documents requires a great deal resources, and that both the Territorial Government and Federal Governments

have internal approval processes for comments provided to NIRB. Considering that interventions are normally required by NIRB 10 working days before Technical Meetings, and that NIRB are proposing to conduct these meetings in the second week of August, interveners will have little more than 3 weeks to review the DEIS. As indicated in our May 20 letter to NIRB, DOE request a period of 60 days for this stage of the review. This is necessary to ensure that the information provided to NIRB is of sufficient quality to allow the Board to make decisions.

Once again we thank NIRB for the opportunity to provide comments on the Doris North Project.

Yours sincerely

MIKE ATKINSON

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