



Ryan Barry
Technical Director
Nunavut Impact Review Board
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Cambridge Bay, NU, X0B 0C0

July 4, 2013

Re: Community Round Table and Pre Hearing Conference

Mr. Barry,

The Baker Lake Hunters and Trappers Organization participated in the Nunavut Impact Review Board's community roundtable and pre hearing conference for AREVA's proposed Kiggavik uranium project. The HTO would like to express several concerns with the structure of these meetings.

During the meetings, the NIRB stated that the purpose of the community round table was to hear community concerns, and to see if communities opposed or supported AREVA's proposal. However, the HTO is concerned that the structure of the meetings resulted in a biased discussion, so the NIRB may not have an accurate picture of what the community feels about AREVA's proposal.

The meetings were held in the spring, when many families from Baker Lake are busy fishing, and preparing dried fish and dried meat out at their camps. The meetings were also mostly held during working hours. Many people who work full time or depend on fish and caribou did not attend the meetings. The NIRB did not hear their perspectives. The time allotted for community questions was also very tight. Some community members were able to dominate the floor, speaking many times, while many others were never given an opportunity to speak.

The format of the community roundtable was also an issue. Community members were told to ask questions to AREVA. AREVA answered questions and responded to concerns like any mining company would. They told people not to worry, that they'd take care of any problems, and reassured us that everything would be ok. The NIRB staff was present, as were many intervening parties, but they mostly stayed out of the discussion, as they were never called upon.

As a result, AREVA's staff was left to guide the discussion, and was allowed to steer the conversation in a very positive direction. Many Inuit in Baker Lake have complained that they do not feel comfortable voicing concerns directly to the mining industry. They feel intimidated to voice opposition, because AREVA's staff of 'experts' provide answers that make them feel stupid for opposing AREVA. These experts are well coached in public speaking, and are trained to talk circles around the rest of us.

If the intervening groups were allowed to participate more, the conversation may have been quite different. Instead of having community members ask AREVA questions, community members could have had a day to discuss their concerns with the intervening groups. They could have had the opportunity to ask these groups if they agree with AREVA's assessment, and if the intervening groups thought AREVA's promises of jobs and environmental protection were possible. This would have given the community a chance to discuss their concerns with independent parties that have reviewed AREVA's proposal. It also would have resulted in a much more critical discussion of what AREVA is proposing.

The community has had many opportunities to discuss their concerns directly with AREVA. As AREVA said in their presentation, they have already held hundreds of 'community engagement events' since they came into Baker Lake. In a way, the community round table ended up being another community engagement opportunity for AREVA.

While community members did have an opportunity to ask questions to the intervener groups during the pre hearing conference, the pre hearing conference was very rushed and there was very little time for community questions and concerns to be discussed. Some community members have also become very disheartened, because they have shared their concerns and sometimes opposition many times before, but it does not seem to have had any effect. Some people feel they've been "consulted to death" on this topic, and that the process will continue to move along no matter what they say. After almost eight years of sharing concerns and opposition, many people are wondering what the point is in speaking out at meetings.

Due to these issues, the HTO is concerned that the NIRB got a very inaccurate view of the community's perspective on AREVA's proposal. Many residents of Baker Lake are still opposed to mining uranium at Kiggavik. As the Baker Lake HTO suggested in our presentation to the pre hearing conference, a public vote is the only thing that could accurately determine how the majority of the community feels about AREVA's proposal.

Sincerely,



Hugh Ikoe
Chairperson

Cc: Joseph Aupaluktuq- Mayor Baker Lake Hamlet Council
Moses Aupaluktuq-MLA-Baker Lake
Nunatsiaq News