



File No. 03MN107

July 14, 2005

Mr. Craig Goodings
Environmental Manager
Cumberland Resources
#950, One Bentall Centre
Box 72, 505 Burrard Street
Vancouver, BC V7X 1M4

Re: Pre Hearing Decision Report for the Meadowbank Gold Project

Dear Mr. Goodings:

Approximately one month ago the Nunavut Impact Review Board (“NIRB” or the “Board”) held a Pre-Hearing Conference (“PHC”) in the communities of Baker Lake (June 6 & 7), Chesterfield Inlet (June 8) and Rankin Inlet (June 9). The Board heard discussion by Parties and the Proponent on nine key issues. This discussion included what, if any, information needed to be included by Cumberland Resources Limited (“CRL”) in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (“FEIS”) before the Meadowbank Gold Project (“the Project”) could proceed to a Final Hearing.

As you will recall, the nine issues were as follows:

1. The schedule for the Preliminary Hearing Conference exchange of information;
2. Intervener identification and registration;
3. The list of issues to be dealt with at the Final Public Hearing and clear statements of the issues;
4. Technical reports and other documents required for the Final Public Hearing;
5. The schedule to be followed by the Parties for the completion of reports needed *prior* to the Final Public Hearing;
6. The schedules, dates, times and place(s) of the Final Public Hearing;
7. Special procedures, if any, to be followed at the Final Public Hearing;
8. Any motions that may be needed before the Final EIS is filed, or the Final Public Hearing commences; and
9. Any other matters that may aid in the simplification of the hearing (i.e. segregation of the hearing into different segments, technical hearings vs. non technical community meetings)

Attached is the Pre Hearing Decision report (the “Report”), which represents the Board’s position on the nine issues, including the information Cumberland needs to include in its FEIS. The following is a highlight of the Report:

Venues for Final Hearing

The venues for the Final Hearing will be Baker Lake, Chesterfield Inlet, and Rankin Inlet. The list of parties and interveners will remain the same as for this Pre-Hearing Conference. The dates for the Final Hearing will be set once further information, including the Final EIS, are received from Cumberland. In order to facilitate scheduling of expert witnesses, primary technical presentations will take place in Baker Lake and the Final Hearing agenda will be organized by specific technical topics.

Site Visit to the Meadowbank Project

Subject to permission from Cumberland, the Board will schedule a site visit as part of the Baker Lake venue. The Board also reserves the right to schedule another technical meeting to deal with technical issues arising after the Final EIS is filed, especially with respect to the all-weather road.

Inclusion of the All-weather Road in this Review

Subject to direction from the Minister, the all-weather road is included in this Part 5 review. To do otherwise would be inconsistent with the Board’s mandate under the NLCA, and would result in undesirable project splitting. The Final Hearing on the all-weather road will not take place until the NPC releases a positive Conformity Decision, or Cumberland otherwise receives an exemption from the Minister.

107 Commitments from Cumberland Resources Limited and Additional Specific Issues

The Board believes Cumberland will resolve most of the parties’ outstanding concerns by complying with the EIS Guidelines, its Conformity Submissions and by implementing the 107 items set out in Appendix 1 of the Report. In addition to the commitments set out in Appendix 1, the Board has set out specific issues related to the following:

- Wildlife;
- Fisheries and aquatics;
- Waste rock and tailings management;
- Climate change;
- All-weather road;
- Shipping and marine;
- Socio-economics; and,
- Traditional knowledge.

Cumberland is expected to respond to these specific issues in the FEIS. Cumberland is particularly encouraged to respond directly to socio-economic issues that have arisen over the course of the Technical Meeting and the PHC.

Cumberland is asked to inform NIRB as soon as possible regarding potential timelines for the filing of the FEIS. Until such time, the NIRB will not set any timelines for the Final Hearing and/or Technical Meeting. NIRB encourages dialogue between Cumberland and Parties to resolve information concerns which may have arisen during the recent Technical Meeting and/or Pre Hearing Conference, reserving the right for NIRB to make any final decisions. Any resolutions to concerns between the Proponent and Parties should be provided to NIRB for decision, direction and placement on the Public Registry.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie Briscoe', with a stylized, cursive script.

Stephanie Briscoe
Executive Director

Cc: Honourable Andy Scott, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
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