



File No. **03MN107**

DATE: December 7, 2005

TO: Meadowbank Distribution List

RE: **Meadowbank Gold Project Final Hearing Schedule and FEIS Conformity Meeting**

Dear Parties:

The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) thanks Parties for their comments on the timing of the Meadowbank Gold Project Final Hearing Schedule, Cumberland Resources Ltd.'s (Cumberland) suggestion to compress the review timelines and on the FEIS Conformity Meeting.

Final Hearing Schedule

Comments on the Final Hearing schedule were received by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI), Department of Land and Resources; the Kivalliq Inuit Association (KivIA); Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) on behalf of Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Transport Canada (TC), Health Canada (HC), and Environment Canada (EC); and the Government of Nunavut (GN) Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. All Parties supported NIRB's final hearing schedule as outlined in its letter to Parties dated November 25, 2005.

The Board understands that the Meadowbank Gold Project has significant potential to make a positive contribution to the economy of Nunavut and Canada, and that projects of this nature are sensitive to short shipping seasons and changing commodity prices. Accordingly, NIRB does its very best to accommodate a proponent's timelines. However, there are constraints within the NIRB processes that must also be accommodated.

First, the Board believes that the project proponent is in the best position to manage the timing of the FEIS submission process and accordingly, the Board typically does not impose timelines for FEIS filings because that matter is largely up to the proponent. While this allows each proponent to manage its own processes, the Board is not able to manage the timing of submissions from various proponents. Accordingly, the only logical way for the Board to accord priority for a final hearing is based on the FEIS filing date (subject to a submission meeting the conformity requirements).

Secondly, the integrity of the decision making process requires the Board be given sufficient time to evaluate and assess all of the evidence and credibility of witnesses during the hearing, in order to properly and diligently make its determination and formulate its report to the Minister.

Third, when NIRB does recommend that a project proceed, and the Board wishes to make it clear to Cumberland that such a decision is made only after a final hearing and that the "go-ahead" decision cannot be pre-judged, there are still other decision points, including the Minister's decision to accept the Board's recommendations, decisions by the Nunavut and local government, as well as key regulatory approvals such as the Nunavut Water Board, that must be applied for, approved, and respected, before moving forward according to their own jurisdiction, not NIRB's.

This being said, and having considered all of the submissions, including Cumberlands' letters of December 5, 2005 and November 28, 2005, NIRB has decided to change the dates of the Final Hearing to the **week of March 27th, 2006**.

Conformity Meeting

Comments from Parties expressing an interest in participating in the FEIS Conformity Meeting were received from Cumberland, NTI, KivIA, INAC, NRCan, EC, DFO, GN – Department of Environment (DoE), and GN – Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Based on these comments, NIRB has decided to hold the meeting via teleconference on **Thursday December 15, 2005 at 11:00 am MST**. Please see the attached meeting agenda.

To make arrangements for this meeting, Parties must provide their phone numbers to NIRB's Manager of Administration, Gladys Joudrey at gjoudrey@nirb.nunavut.ca or 867-983-4611 before **Monday December 12, 2005**.

If you have any questions, please contact me at sbriscoe@nirb.nunavut.ca or 867-983-4603.

Sincerely,

(Original Signed By:)

Stephanie Briscoe, Executive Director
Nunavut Impact Review Board

cc Honourable Andy Scott, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Meadowbank Distribution List

