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June 30, 2006

NRCan File # NT-010

Ms. Stephanie Briscoe
Executive Director
Nunavut Impact Review Board
P.O. Box 1360
Cambridge Bay, NU X0B 0C0

By email: sbriscoe@nirb.nunavut.ca

Re: Temporary Explosives Factory License for Meadowbank Project

Dear Ms. Briscoe,

The purpose of this letter is to inform the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) that based on recent information provided by Cumberland Resources Ltd. (the proponent) to Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), the proponent will require a temporary explosives factory license under section 7(1)(a) of the *Explosives Act*, for a temporary explosives factory, to be located near the Hamlet of Baker Lake. This authorization, under the *Explosives Act*, would be in addition to an explosives factory license required for a permanent explosives facility based at the mine site.

The proponent intends to use an ANFO (ammonium nitrate-fuel oil) mix truck, based at the Hamlet, to supply explosives for quarrying related to road construction between Baker Lake and the mine site. On May 12, NRCan's Explosives Regulatory Division informed the proponent that this truck would require a support facility and that a temporary explosives factory license would be required to operate these.

The proposed factory site would be a temporary structure, consisting of a fire resistant fabric building with a vinyl wash pad liner with sump. This serves to shelter and wash the ANFO mix truck. Waste wash water would be removed by a local contractor and disposed of at an approved local waste water facility. Ammonium nitrate would be transported to the site and transferred onto the truck.

The need for a temporary explosive factory license was not identified by the proponent in its final environmental impact statement and supporting documentation, nor during the public hearings held in March, 2006 for the Meadowbank Gold Mine Project. This additional activity and regulatory authorization, however, should be made known to the NIRB and interveners to the review of the project to ensure that there has been sufficient information provided for public consultation.

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NRCan does not anticipate having any concerns with what the proponent has proposed both in terms of environmental assessment requirements or, if operated in compliance with regulations, the mitigation of possible environmental impacts. Unlike a license for a permanent explosives factory, NRCan does not require a screening-level environmental assessment for this authorization under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* due to the temporary and mobile nature of the facility.

NRCan is bringing this matter to the attention of the NIRB for their consideration in advance of the NIRB's July 7, 2006 deadline for intervenor submissions on the supplemental material that Cumberland provided on the Meadowbank Gold Project. NRCan, as an authorizing agency and federal expert on explosives, is prepared to provide any requested information or advice to the NIRB on this matter.

Sincerely,

Andrew McAllister
Senior Environmental Assessment Officer

cc: Rob Johnstone, Minerals and Metals Sector, NRCan
Neil Maclean, Explosives Regulatory Division, NRCan
Brad Thiele, Cumberland Resources Ltd.