



NIRB File No.: 03MN107

DFO File No.: 03-HCAA-CA7-00191; 14HCAA-01046

July 30, 2015

To: Meadowbank Distribution List

Sent via email

Re: Conformity Determination for AEM's Addendum to the FEIS for the Vault Pit Expansion Proposal to the Meadowbank Gold Mine Project and Commencement of the NIRB's Technical Review Period

Dear Parties:

On July 24, 2015 the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) formally acknowledged receipt of Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd.'s (AEM or Proponent) Addendum to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) submission for the Vault Pit Expansion proposal (NIRB File No. 03MN107). The Board initiated an internal review of the Addendum to the Final EIS to determine whether or not it conformed to previously issued EIS Guidelines¹ for the Meadowbank Gold Project.

The NIRB has completed its internal review of the Addendum to the FEIS submitted by AEM and determined that the submission conforms to the Board's EIS Guidelines. Recognizing the Minister's direction for the NIRB to ensure that an expeditious and thorough review of the Addendum is undertaken, the NIRB is hereby initiating the public technical review period for this file.

AEM's Addendum to the FEIS submission and all materials received and pertaining to the Vault Pit Expansion proposal can be accessed from the NIRB's online public registry at the following location:

<http://ftp.nirb.ca/03-MONITORING/03MN107-MEADOWBANK%20GOLD%20MINE/01-PROJECT%20CERTIFICATE/05-AMENDMENTS/02-VAULT%20EXPANSION-CONDITION%2048/>

PROJECT PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

AEM is proposing to include the following *additional* activities and changes to expand the current Vault Pit operations into Phaser Lake:

¹ "Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Guidelines for the Meadowbank Gold Project" issued on February 20, 2004

- Expansion of Vault Pit into Phaser Lake to develop Phaser Pit and BB Phaser Pit. Small open pits would extend from the perimeter of Vault Pit to the southwest into Phaser Lake;
- Development of Phaser and BB Phaser pits to include;
 - Dewatering of Phaser Lake (estimated volume of 700,000 cubic metres) in 2016
 - Removal of fish in 2016 (fish-out)
 - Offsetting of loss of fish habitat in Phaser Lake
 - Removal of 402,388 tonnes of additional ore (~1.3% of the total ore production of Meadowbank)
 - Removal of 2,945,477 tonnes of waste rock (~1.4% of total waste rock production at Meadowbank)
 - Mining of pits to commence in 2017
- Construction and operation of additional haul roads connecting the new pits to Vault Pit infrastructure;
- Use of existing Meadowbank mill for ore processing;
- Use of existing Vault Waste Rock Facility for waste rock storage;
- Use of existing tailings storage facility, infrastructure and Vault haul road;
- Development of Phaser and BB Phaser pits to increase mine activities by 30 days. AEM considers this to be within the scope of the original project as permitted and assessed in the FEIS (within the 9-10 years of operation life);
- Water diversion and water management in the Vault area will extend by 30 days of operation; and
- Re-flooding of Phaser Pit once mining has been completed.

AEM noted that no changes to the closure plans have been anticipated, including the re-flooding of the Vault Pit as originally proposed within the FEIS for the Meadowbank Project and the closure involved for the Vault waste rock storage area.

TECHNICAL REVIEW PERIOD

The Technical Review Process

The technical review is meant to provide for a detailed review of the Vault Pit Expansion proposal to analyze the adequacy and assess the quality of the information presented by the Proponent in its submission. This step in the NIRB's assessment of the Vault Pit Expansion proposal involves parties' development of technical review comments which outline whether they agree with the Proponent's conclusions regarding the potential ecosystemic and socio-economic impacts of the proposed activities, the adequacy of proposed mitigation and monitoring measures and ultimately whether parties support the approval of the Vault Pit Expansion as currently proposed. The Proponent will be provided with an opportunity to respond to parties' technical review comment submissions and the NIRB intends to schedule a meeting of technical experts if required following the provision of the Proponent's response package to facilitate further information exchange and assist with the formulation of parties' final written submissions. Interested parties, intervenors and the Proponent will be invited to provide final written submissions to the Board in advance of the Final Public Hearing for the Vault Pit Expansion proposal and the Board's reconsideration of the Meadowbank Gold Mine Project Certificate pursuant to Section 12.8.2 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA).

The development of technical review comments involves parties' formulation of information requests (IRs) that are based upon their review of the Addendum to the FEIS and the subsequent identification of any gaps or areas of uncertainty which must be addressed. The NIRB will provide additional guidance to parties regarding the suggested format and structure of submissions of technical comments following receipt of IRs.

Call for Information Requests

To facilitate the development of technical review comments by parties, the NIRB invites interested parties to provide the NIRB with IRs directed to the Proponent and/or other parties regarding the Vault Pit Expansion proposal. It should be noted that IRs are not meant to serve as technical review comments, but rather should identify information gaps within the Addendum that need to be addressed so that parties can develop their respective technical review comments. Please note that parties are encouraged to review Appendix A which provides the NIRB's suggested format for the submission of IRs. Additional clarification regarding the information that must be included within submissions as follows:

- A clear reference to the volume, document, section, and/or page number in the Addendum to the FEIS where relevant information may be found, if applicable;
- To whom the IR is directed;
- Identification of the issue;
- The concern associated with the issue; and
- A clear rationale of the issue's importance to the impact assessment of the proposed project.

By copy of this letter, the NIRB is requesting that responsible authorities, interested parties and those with specialist advice provide their information requests to the NIRB on or before **12:00 pm MST, August 28, 2015**.

REQUEST TO PROPONENT

The NIRB previously requested that those interested parties requiring copies of the Addendum to the FEIS to provide confirmation of the required number of copies to the Board. The NIRB is forwarding the list of parties that have requested hard copies and/or digital copies of the Addendum to the FEIS from AEM (see Table A).

The Board expects the Proponent will continue to follow up with regulatory authorities responsible for potentially authorizing this Addendum and supply sufficient hard copies of the document for review purposes.

NEXT STEPS

The next steps in the NIRB's NLCA Section 12.8.2 reconsideration of the terms and conditions of Project Certificate No. 004 for the Meadowbank Gold Mine Project are outlined as follows for the information of parties:

- Submission of Information Requests (IRs) directly to the NIRB by interested parties on or before **12:00 pm MST, Friday, August 28, 2015** (30 days).

- After considering all IRs and making decisions regarding their suitability, the NIRB will forward all appropriate requests to the Proponent (and other parties if applicable) by **Wednesday, September 2, 2015**.
- Upon forwarding IRs for a response, the NIRB may set a timeframe for the Proponent (and other parties if applicable) to respond with an IR response package.
- Upon receipt of the IR response package(s), all parties will be given **60 days** for submission of technical review comments.

Once again, the NIRB requests that all interested parties submit their Information Requests to the NIRB by email at info@nirb.ca or by fax to (867) 983-2594 on or before **12:00 pm MST, Friday, August 28, 2015**.

Should you have any questions or require further clarification regarding the next steps in the Board's assessment of the Vault Pit Expansion proposal, please contact the undersigned at (867) 793-4480 or sgranchinho@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,



Sophia Granchinho, M.Sc. EP
Senior Technical Advisor
Nunavut Impact Review Board

cc: Stéphane Robert, Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd
Ryan Vanengen, Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd.
Phyllis Beaulieu, Nunavut Water Board
Luis Manzo, Kivalliq Inuit Association
Julie Marentette, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Georgina Williston, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Tanika Simmons, Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency

Attachments: 1) Appendix A: Suggested Format for Information Requests
2) Table A: List of parties requesting hard copies/digital copies of AEM's Addendum to the FEIS for the Vault Pit Expansion Proposal – NIRB File No. 03MN107

APPENDIX A: SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR INFORMATION REQUESTS

Format & File Size

Parties are requested to provide information request submissions in a fully functional, electronically searchable Word or PDF file. Noting the current constraints with respect to internet bandwidth and speed, the NIRB requests that all submissions be submitted as individual files no larger than 5 MB.

Information Requests

The purpose of information requests is to identify information gaps or areas of uncertainty within the Addendum that need to be addressed so that parties can develop their respective technical review comments. Information requests can originate from, and be directed at, any of the parties involved in the assessment. Submissions must outline why the information required is necessary to facilitate the party's technical analysis of the Addendum and the potential impacts of the proposal. After considering all information requests submitted and making decisions regarding their suitability, the NIRB will forward all appropriate requests to the Proponent and/or other parties as applicable. The NIRB will assess suitability in terms of the requirements at the initial phase of the reconsideration process, and must balance these requirements with information that may be requested as part of technical review comments or at a more advanced stage of the reconsideration of the Addendum under Section 12.8.2 of the NLCA.

Parties are asked to ensure that information requests (IR) address the points set out below:

IR Source:	The overall submission should clearly identify the organization/department/intervener proposing the request(s).
IR Number:	Each specific IR must be numbered in order to enable effective cross-referencing of the submission.
To:	Clearly identify to which organizations/departments/agencies the IR is directed (e.g., the Proponent and/or specific organization(s) of whom the information is requested).
Subject:	Identify the issue; list the general subject or topic associated with the request (e.g., monitoring of sediment quality).
Reference:	A clear reference to any applicable volume, document, section, and/or page number in the Addendum where information relevant to the request may be found.
Issue/Concern:	Provide background information and justification for the request. The issue/concern should identify any shortcomings of available information, concerns associated with the issue and how the requested information is relevant to the technical analysis of information within the Addendum. A clear rationale of the issue's importance to the impact assessment of the proposed project is required.
Information Request:	Specifically state the question and/or outline the specific information being requested to the organization. Separate items requested should be appropriately numbered in order to track the provision of responses.

Table A: List of parties requesting hard copies/digital copies of AEM's Addendum to the FEIS for the Vault Pit Expansion Proposal – NIRB File No. 03MN107

Organization	Address	Number of copies¹
Government of Nunavut	David Beamer Department of Environment P.O. Box 83 Rankin Inlet, NU X0C 0G0	1 digital / memory key copy
	Melanie Wilson Department of Environment P.O. Box 209 Igloolik, NU X0A 0L0	1 digital / memory key copy
	Mitch Campbell Department of Environment P.O. Box 120 Arviat, NU X0C 0E0	1 digital / memory key copy
	Denise Baikie Department of Environment P.O. Box 1000, Station 1360 Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0	5 digital / memory key copies
	Lou Kamermans Department of Economic Development and Transportation P.O Box 1000, Station 1500 Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0	1 hard copy; 11 digital / memory key copies
	David Beamer Heritage Rivers Planner Acting Coordinator, Parks: Planning and Operations (Kivalliq Region) Nunavut Parks and Special Places Department of Environment P.O. Box 83 Rankin Inlet NU X0C 0G0	1 hard copy; 1 digital / memory key copies
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada	Jennifer Walsh Environmental Analyst, Natural Resources and Environment Branch Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada 15 Eddy St. 10th Floor Gatineau, QC K1A0H4	1 hard copy; 2 digital / memory key copies
	Laura Harris Environmental Assessment Coordinator Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0	3 digital / memory key copies

Organization	Address	Number of copies¹
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Julie Marentette Fisheries Protection Biologist – Fisheries Protection Program 301-5204 50 th Ave. Yellowknife, NT X1A 1E2	1 digital / memory key copy
Transport Canada	Adam Downing Environmental Officer Environmental Affairs, Prairie and Northern Region Transport Canada P.O. Box 8550 3-344 Edmonton Street Winnipeg, MB R3C 0P6	1 digital / memory key copy

1: Where not specified, hard copies should be accompanied by a digital copy (CD/DVD)