



## NEWS RELEASE

NIRB File No.: 03MN107

### **Nunavut Impact Review Board Issues Reconsideration Report and Recommendations for Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd.'s "In-Pit Tailings Disposal Modification" Proposal for the Meadowbank Project**

CAMBRIDGE BAY, NU – August 31, 2018 – This Reconsideration Report and Recommendations has been issued by the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) to present the findings of the Board's assessment of Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd.'s (Agnico Eagle or the Proponent) "In-Pit Tailings Disposal Modification" Proposal (In-Pit Tailings Disposal Proposal), a proposed amendment to the approved Meadowbank Gold Mine Project (NIRB File No. 03MN107). The scope of the In-Pit Tailings Disposal Proposal as assessed by the NIRB involves the proposed disposal of mining tailings in three mined out pits within the footprint of the approved Meadowbank Gold Mine: Portage Pit A, Portage Pit E and Goose Pit. Agnico Eagle proposes to use this method of tailings disposal in addition to the currently approved practice of placing mining tailings within the existing Meadowbank Tailings Storage Facility. Agnico Eagle proposes to transition to the in-pit disposal method following the closure of the Meadowbank Tailings Storage Facility, to accommodate tailings produced through processing ore from the Whale Tail Pit Gold Mine.

On March 22, 2018 the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC or Commission) concluded that the In-Pit Tailings Disposal Proposal represented a significant modification to the approved Meadowbank Gold Mine Project because it is for a component or activity that was not part of the original or previously-amended project proposal. Accordingly, the Commission referred the In-Pit Tailings Disposal Proposal for assessment by the NIRB under the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)* and the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act (NuPPAA)* prior to issuance of any permits, licences or other approvals by associated Regulatory Authorities.

Following a technical meeting hosted via teleconference by the NIRB on June 12, 2018, the NIRB released a notice under s. 112(3) of the *NuPPAA* noting that the NIRB was able to conclude with confidence that the In-Pit Tailings Disposal Proposal constituted a significant modification based on additional information received from the Proponent and regulatory participants. The NIRB also determined that the most appropriate mechanism for conducting the required assessment of the modifications proposed in the In-Pit Tailings Disposal Proposal was through a reconsideration of the Terms and Conditions of Project Certificate No. 004, under Section 12.8.2 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and s. 112 of the *NuPPAA*.

Throughout the reconsideration process the Board provided numerous opportunities to participants from federal, territorial and local governments, the Kivalliq Inuit Association, local Hunters and Trappers Organizations, and the public to share their perspectives about the In-Pit Tailings Disposal Proposal, to ask questions and to highlight their concerns about the potential ecosystemic and socio-economic effects (both positive and negative) of the proposed works and activities.

Appropriate waste deposition and treatment options are a significant part of managing the impacts from all mining projects, as the Board has considered with each phase of Agnico Eagle's development related to the Meadowbank Gold Mine (Meadowbank Mine and Vault Pit Expansion Amendment assessed under NIRB File No. 03MN107, and the Whale Tail Pit Project assessed under NIRB File No. 16MN056). Although parties identified information and modelling of interest to them beyond what was presented by Agnico Eagle within its application for the In-Pit Tailings Disposal Proposal, the NIRB recognizes that if this proposal is allowed to proceed, the subsequent water licensing process would provide sufficient opportunity for these issues to be addressed and be a more appropriate platform for their resolution.

Agnico Eagle continues to utilize the Meadowbank Tailings Storage Facility for deposition of mine tailings, and had previously proposed expansion of this facility to accommodate development of the Whale Tail Pit project, which was subsequently approved by the Board. However, when investigating what specifically would be required to expand the existing Tailings Storage Facility the Proponent considered additional options for tailings disposal and has concluded that the in-pit tailings disposal option is its preferred method moving forward.

The NIRB recognizes that the Proponent has been clear in its intention to use the facilities at the Meadowbank Gold Mine as a "hub" for future developments in the area to the extent practicable. In effect, the implementation of the In-Pit Tailings Disposal Proposal would significantly increase Agnico Eagle's storage space required for tailings produced from developing the Whale Tail Pit Deposit, and could also accommodate additional tailings potentially generated by mining additional gold deposits in the area in future. However, the Board notes that approval of the increase in tailings storage capacity at the Meadowbank site through in-pit disposal does not authorize Agnico Eagle to proceed with development of any additional deposits (outside of the scope of the existing Meadowbank, Vault Pit and Whale Tail Pit sites) in future until additional impact assessments of such proposals as may be required are completed.

As set out in detail within the Report, having reviewed and considered all of the information provided to the Board throughout the reconsideration process for the In-Pit Tailings Disposal Proposal, the NIRB has concluded that this proposed amendment to the Meadowbank Gold Mine may proceed to the licensing and permitting regulatory phase with no revisions to the existing Terms and Conditions of Project Certificate No. 004 required. As always, the Board is grateful to all who shared their experiences, expertise and perspectives to assist us in completing a thorough and timely assessment. The NIRB recognizes and appreciates the positive, collaborative and respectful contributions of all who continue to work together to ensure that the Meadowbank Gold Mine Project delivers lasting economic benefits to the Kivalliq Region while minimizing the potential for adverse socio-economic and ecosystemic effects.

The Reconsideration Report, which includes an executive summary, is available from the NIRB's online public registry at [www.nirb.ca/project/125253](http://www.nirb.ca/project/125253).

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Copland  
Chairperson  
Nunavut Impact Review Board

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