



**Related to NIRB File No.: 11MN034**  
NPC File No. 148672

February 20, 2018

Jamie Quesnel  
Environmental Superintendent - Nunavut  
Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd.  
P.O. Box 879  
Rankin Inlet, NU X0C 0G0

Sent via email: [jamie.quesnel@agnicoeagle.com](mailto:jamie.quesnel@agnicoeagle.com)

**Re: Request for Comments on Agnico Eagle Mines Limited's Proposed "Saline Effluent Discharge to Marine Environment, Rankin Inlet, Meliadine Gold Mine" and Modification to the Meliadine Gold Mine Project**

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Dear Jamie Quesnel:

On January 5, 2018 the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) received a referral from the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC or Commission) to screen Agnico Eagle Mines Limited's (Agnico Eagle, or Proponent) "Saline Effluent Discharge to Marine Environment, Rankin Inlet, Meliadine Gold Mine" project proposal, with an accompanying positive conformity determination under the Keewatin Regional Land Use Plan. In the conformity determination, the NPC noted that Agnico Eagle's project proposal represents a significant modification to the approved Meliadine Gold Mine Project (NIRB File No. 11MN034) because it is for a component or activity that was not part of the original or previously-amended project proposal. Further, on January 26, 2018 the NIRB requested that the Proponent provide additional information in order to determine the full scope and nature of the proposal, and the Proponent provided the requested information to the NIRB on February 15, 2018.

As outlined in more detail below, the NIRB is soliciting comments from interested parties and regulatory authorities on Agnico Eagle's proposed modification to the Meliadine Gold Mine Project prior to determining whether the proposed changes warrant reconsideration of the existing Project Certificate No. 006 in accordance with the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)* Section 12.8.2.

The alternative to the Board processing the “Saline Effluent Discharge to Marine Environment, Rankin Inlet, Meliadine Gold Mine” project proposal as a reconsideration of the terms and conditions of the existing Meliadine Gold Mine Project Certificate would involve the NIRB conducting a separate screening of the modification project proposal pursuant to Section 12.4.4 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and s. 79 of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*, S.C. 2013, c. 14, s. 2 (*NuPPAA*).

All materials received and pertaining to Agnico Eagle’s project proposal can be obtained from the NIRB’s online public registry at [www.nirb.ca](http://www.nirb.ca) by using any of the following search criteria:

- Project Name: Meliadine Gold Mine
- NIRB File No.: 11MN034
- Application No.: 124106

#### SUMMARY OF THE MODIFICATION REQUEST

The Meliadine Gold Mine is located approximately 25 km north of Rankin Inlet, with Phase 1 focusing on both open pit and underground mining at the Tirganiaq deposit. The underground mine will extend below the permafrost and is expected to act as a sink for groundwater flow. In its Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), the Proponent assessed the discharge of excess saline groundwater into Meliadine Lake; discharge into the marine environment was considered an alternative option that was not assessed. Criteria for discharge into Meliadine Lake were defined in the Type “A” Water Licence issued to the Proponent by the Nunavut Water Board in 2015 (No. 2AM-MEL1631). To date, all groundwater inflow has been stored in underground sumps or in surface water containment ponds, or actively evaporated.

Agnico Eagle’s application materials for the proposed amendment indicated that while it is still intending to discharge to Meliadine Lake, due to expected volumes of groundwater, a second discharge location is anticipated. Agnico Eagle is proposing to additionally discharge saline effluent into Melvin Bay at Itivia Harbour. The proposed effluent discharge would occur during underground mining operations from 2019 to 2032.

According to the project proposal as filed by Agnico Eagle, the scope of the amendment would include the following specific undertakings, works or activities:

- Installation of a discharge pipe (approximately 260 to 345 metres long) with a diffuser placed on the seabed at Itivia Harbour;
- Construction of an unheated saline water storage tank at Itivia Harbour;
- Pumping of saline groundwater to the Saltwater Treatment Plant at the Meliadine mine site for treatment in order to meet marine discharge criteria;
- Seasonal (winter) storage of treated saline groundwater in surface containment ponds or underground sumps at the Meliadine mine site;
- Seasonal transport (May through October) of treated effluent to Itivia Harbour along the all-weather access road with the use of) water trucks making a total of 8 to 16 one-way trips per day;
- Transfer and storage of treated effluent into the unheated saline water storage tank located at Itivia Harbour; and

- Discharge of treated effluent into Melvin Bay during the open water season (May through October) at a depth of approximately 20 metres and at a rate of up to 800 cubic metres/day.

#### REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

Reflecting the NIRB's jurisdiction to reconsider the terms and conditions of an existing Project Certificate and the important role of public and technical comment submissions that supported the development of the terms and conditions in the existing Project Certificate; the NIRB is seeking comments on Agnico Eagle's request for reconsideration from interested parties and regulatory authorities for the Meliadine Gold Mine Project prior to determining whether the proposed changes warrant reconsideration of the existing Project Certificate in accordance with Section 12.8.2 of the *Nunavut Agreement* alone or in conjunction with subsection 112(1) of the *NuPPAA*.

In asking for comments at this point, the NIRB notes that if the Board determines that it is appropriate for the Board to assess the "Saline Effluent Discharge to Marine Environment, Rankin Inlet, Meliadine Gold Mine" project proposal by reconsidering the terms and conditions of the Project Certificate, it is anticipated that a comprehensive submission in the form of an update or addendum to the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Meliadine Gold Mine Project would be required to support the necessary technical review of the proposal. The NIRB would, at that time, initiate a public review of the application, including public consultation, the issuance of additional Guidelines, facilitation of technical meetings, and written or oral hearings as deemed necessary in accordance with the NIRB's Rules of Procedures.<sup>1</sup>

Alternatively, if the NIRB does not consider it to be appropriate to assess the project proposal under the Board's jurisdiction to reconsider the terms and conditions of the existing Project Certificate No. 006, the Board would process the project proposal as a new screening under Article 12, Section 12.4.4 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and section 86 of the *NuPPAA*.

By copy of this letter, the NIRB invites interested parties, members of the public, and those regulatory authorities with jurisdiction over components of the Meliadine Gold Mine Project to provide comments and advice to the Board with respect to the following:

- Whether it is appropriate for the proposed amendment to be assessed as a reconsideration as set out in the *Nunavut Agreement*, Sections 12.8.2 (a), (b), and/or (c), and if so, which provisions of the *Nunavut Agreement* are applicable to support the reconsideration;
- If the commenting party accepts that the request meets the requirements for reconsideration set out under the *Nunavut Agreement*, and taking into account the transition provisions of *NuPPAA* (subsection 235), whether the *NuPPAA* should apply to the Board's reconsideration;
- If the *NuPPAA* applies to the reconsideration, which provisions of subsection 112(1)(a), (b) and/or (c) are applicable to support the reconsideration; and

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<sup>1</sup> NIRB Rules of Procedure, September 3, 2009. Available online at [www.nirb.ca/rules-of-procedure](http://www.nirb.ca/rules-of-procedure).

- Any matter of importance to the commenting party related to the Board's processing of the project proposal.

The NIRB requests that interested parties submit comments directly to the NIRB via email to [info@nirb.ca](mailto:info@nirb.ca) or via fax at (867) 983-2594 on or before **March 13, 2018**.

Should you have any questions or require further clarification, please contact Shanley Thompson, Technical Advisor II at (867) 983-4607 or via email at [sthompson@nirb.ca](mailto:sthompson@nirb.ca).

Sincerely,



Kelli Gillard, B.Sc., P.Ag.  
Acting Director, Technical Services  
Nunavut Impact Review Board

cc: Karén Kharatyan, Nunavut Water Board  
Luis Manzo, Kivalliq Inuit Association  
Maria Serra, Kivalliq Inuit Association  
Tracey McCaie, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada  
Georgina Williston, Environment and Climate Change Canada  
Veronique D'Amours-Gauthier, Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
Rob Johnstone, Natural Resources Canada  
Rachelle Besner, Natural Resources Canada  
Transport Canada  
Meliadine Gold Distribution List