



Water Resources Division  
Resource Management Directorate  
Nunavut Regional Office  
P.O. Box 100  
Iqaluit, NU, X0A 0H0

Your file - Votre référence  
2AM-MEL1631  
Our file - Notre référence  
GCDOCS: 109245816

January 31, 2023

Richard Dwyer  
Manager of Licensing  
Nunavut Water Board  
P.O. Box 119  
Gjoa Haven, NU, X0B 1J0  
E-mail: [licensing@nwb-oen.ca](mailto:licensing@nwb-oen.ca)

**Re: Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada's Initial Review of the  
Licence Amendment Application for the Meliadine Extension project Type A  
Water Licence No. 2AM-MEL1631**

Dear Richard,

Thank you for January 16, 2023, invitation to review the referenced licence amendment application submitted by Agnico Eagle (AEM), for Type A Water Licence No. 2AM-MEL1631.

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) has conducted an initial review of the application package and, in an effort to fully understand AEM's request for a modified concurrent process, examined the application materials provided to the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) as well as those provided to CIRNAC by the Nunavut Water Board (NWB). CIRNAC has completed this initial review pursuant to its mandated responsibilities under the *Nunavut Waters and Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal Act* and the *Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Act* and provides the following comment in response to the Boards letter.

**A. BACKGROUND**

The Meliadine Mine project has undergone a number of amendments and additions to the project scope over the last ten years.

May 19, 2016, Type A Water Licence 2AM-MEL1631 was approved to begin construction and operation of the Meliadine Mine. Under the initial application, AEM restricted the scope of the application to the exploitation of the Tiriganiaq deposit.



Since 2016, there have been two previous submissions to increase the scope of the project to the NIRB including;

- 2019 – the NIRB amended the Project Certificate to include discharge of saline effluent to the marine environment via diffuser at Itivia Harbour and to convey, via truck, saline effluent along the All Weather Access Road (AWAR) to Itivia Harbour, and;
- In 2021 – The NIRB amended the Project Certificate to include the conveyance of saline effluent via a waterline along the all weather road to accommodate an increased volume of discharge at Itivia Harbour and commitment by AEM to the community to reduce/ minimize any discharge to Lake Melidaine.

Currently, the proposal before NIRB is an additional request to extend or increase the scope of the project. Specifically, the following form the proposal;

1. Open pit mining of F Zone, Wesmeg, Pump, and Discovery deposits and associated infrastructure;
2. Underground mining and associated saline water management infrastructures at the Pump, F Zone, and Discovery;
3. Development of a portal and associated infrastructures in the Tiriganiaq-Wolf area to improve access to and expand the existing Tiriganiaq underground mine;
4. Construction and operation of a wind farm;
5. Construction of access roads;
6. Use of additional borrow pits and quarries to replace depleted sources and build roads to the wind farm, Tiriganiaq-Wolf portal, Discovery, and other deposits;
7. Extension of the operation phase (i.e., mine life) by 11 years to 2043; and
8. Alternatives for the future to use exhausted open pits to store tailings and waste rock.

The current process before the NIRB has been ongoing for a number of months, with the most recent technical sessions being held in Rankin Inlet on November 23 and 24, 2022. During that technical session, the proponent made a Commitment to address information gaps identified by multiple federal departments, including CIRNAC, with respect to item 8 above, “Alternatives for the future to use exhausted open pits to store tailings and waste rock.”

In reviewing the package of materials submitted to the NIRB, AEM has stated that additional details and discussion related to potential “in Pit” disposal options / alternatives would be discussed and presented during the Water Board’s Amendment process for 2AM-MEL1631.



In reviewing the package submitted by AEM to the NWB and subsequently provided to CIRNAC, the following references to pit filling were noted:

1. In the Application for Amendment, Item 9, Description of Undertaking, the last bullet states, *“an alternative for options in the future to use exhausted open pits to store tailings and waste rock to complement the current waste management strategies.”*
2. In the Main Application Document, Section 2.5 Options/Alternatives, Sub-Section 2.5.1 page 40, AEM states:
  - a. *“Agnico Eagle is assessing the potential for in-pit slurry tailings deposition as an alternative to the dry stacking method currently employed. If there is no in-pit disposal, the alternative is to continue with current practices.”*
  - b. *“Agnico Eagle is also applying to place waste rock in mined out (exhausted) pits.”*
  - c. *“Studies to support the evaluation of pits that could be utilized for in-pit deposition of tailings and waste rock are being reviewed during the current NIRB review process. **When Operations decide to proceed, Agnico Eagle will provide 90 days notice to the NWB.**”*
3. Review of all the Design and Study documents, Appendix D and E, respectively, provided as supporting information to the amendment application, containing only technical and environmental information related to the extension of the mining milling and waste management practices and activities as presently being carried out.

To be clear, no information is provided in Appendix D or E on “in-pit disposal alternatives”. The information provided relates to:

- extended mining of ores from additional pits and underground locations,
  - generation of more waste rock from extended mining that will be placed at existing and additional waste rock storage facilities (WRSFs),
  - extended milling and generation of more tailings to be dry stack placed at the existing tailings site,
  - construction and operation of infrastructure and facilities associated with these extended and additional mining and milling activities.
  - The life of mine and closure and post closure schedule has been revised in accordance with these activities.
4. Similarly, scans of AEM's Management Plans also found that the information provided to the NWB and regulators to date is only focussed on the extension activities as described above, with no information on “in-pit disposal alternatives”.

CIRNAC has not reviewed nor been provided an opportunity to make comments to the NWB on the practice of in-pit disposal of tailing and waste rock with respect to this site. The Main Application Document, Section 2.5 Options/Alternatives, Sub-Section 2.5.1 C on page



40 suggests that this process, of CIRNAC providing comments to NWB on the practices mentioned above, has been completed. Therefore, AEM is proposing that they would only require a 90 day notice to be given to the board before undertaking any further activities related to In-Pit filling of waste rock or tailings. This is not the case, this process, like all other processes that are additions to the scope of a Type A License are reviewed during the application process. To complete this process information is required from the proponent.

## Summary Conclusions

Based on CIRNAC's initial review of AEM's 13 January 2023 NWB Licence Extension Amendment Application information, we conclude that no information has been provided to the NWB with respect to AEMs proposed option / alternative for in-pit tailings and waster rock deposition.

CIRNAC recognizes that a date of February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023 has been set for a meeting with Federal Officials where AEM has committed to providing more information on their proposal to include In-pit filling. Any information provided by the proponent at that time will be reviewed as part of the NIRB process. This information must also then be provided to the NWB to be distributed to Regulators to support any concurrent review process.

At that time, if sufficient information to conduct a review and provide substantive comment and recommendations back to the Board is not provided, CIRNAC would recommend to the NWB that the board place the concurrent Review process, as requested by the proponent, on hold until such time as the proponent provides sufficient information to regulators to complete a thorough review of the proposed activities requested to be incorporated under this amendment process.

Respectfully,

*Andrew Keim*

Andrew Keim  
Manager

Water Resources, Nunavut Regional Office

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada

[Andrew.Keim@rcaanc-cirnac.ca](mailto:Andrew.Keim@rcaanc-cirnac.ca)

Tel : (867)-975-4550

Cell: (306) 501-4047