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NUNAVUT WATER BOARD  
NUNAVUT IMALIRIYIN KATIMAYINGI  
OFFICE DES EAUX DU NUNAVUT

**File No: 2AM-MEL1631/  
Amendment Application**

January 21, 2021

Brian Zawadski  
PO Box 614  
Rankin Inlet, NU X0C 0G0

Email: [titan@northwestel.net](mailto:titan@northwestel.net)

**Subject: Response to Feedback About the Community Session Associated with the  
Amendment Application for Type “A” Water Licence No: 2AM-MEL1631;  
Meliadine Project; Agnico Eagle Mines Limited**

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Dear Mr. Zawadski:

Thank you for providing your feedback regarding the community session chaired by the Nunavut Water Board staff (NWB or Board) on the evening of January 19, 2021 in relation to the Board’s consideration of an application to amend Type “A” Water Licence No: 2AM-MEL1631 that was submitted by Agnico Eagle Mines Limited (Agnico Eagle) for the Meliadine Project (the Application).

As noted during the session, there were some initial difficulties in the set up of the in-person hubs for community members that meant adjustments needed to be made during the meeting to provide better access to simultaneous Inuktitut interpretation, and to project the relevant presentations on the screens available at the two hubs. Unfortunately, these adjustments resulted in a 20 minute delay in the proceedings. The Board acknowledges that due to travel restrictions and COVID-19 protocols, the NWB staff could not be present in Rankin Inlet to host the in-person meeting. As a result, some of the Board’s normal practices, such as making available paper copies of all presentations and the Agenda in English and Inuktitut, did not occur. We apologize for the interruption to the meetings while proceedings in the hubs were adjusted, and have followed up with our staff to ensure our normal practices are followed in the future, even if the NWB staff cannot be present in-person.

The Board also clearly heard the message conveyed by you and the community members in attendance that the community wants the Board to provide additional opportunities for the public

to be informed and consulted about the Application and the Board's processing of the Application. Based on the feedback provided during the community session and recent correspondence from the Kivalliq Inuit Association on this topic, the Board is currently following up with service and technology providers to identify how best to provide additional opportunities. Further guidance will be provided by the Board, as we identify some practical alternatives.

In your feedback, you made several assertions that the Board would like to respond to specifically with the following clarifications:

**1. Notice of the community session**

The NWB issued initial correspondence informing the public about the community session that would be held in Rankin Inlet on January 19, 2021 via our normal channels of the distribution list on December 10, 2020. The NWB's distribution list includes all local organizations in the Kivalliq region. The NWB's follow-up correspondence with a final Agenda and procedural direction was sent to the distribution list on January 15, 2021. In the direction provided with the Agenda, the Board advised the public that there would be in-person hubs available in the community, as well as a separate phone line dedicated for the Inuktitut interpretation. Additionally, the Board advised the public to download the presentations from the NWB's FTP folder for their convenience.

**2. Differences between the Nunavut Impact Review Board's (NIRB) Technical Meeting and the NWB's Community Session**

In your feedback, you compared the NWB's community session to a recent meeting conducted by the NIRB. While the NWB is pleased to hear those meetings went smoothly, there are some important logistical differences between these two proceedings that should be remembered:

- As is often the case for Technical Meetings, the entire NIRB meeting was conducted solely via teleconference with all participants phoning into one of two dedicated lines
- There were no in-person hubs provided
- There was no videoconference link necessary
- Simultaneous Inuktitut interpretation was available but was not required by the participants.

The community session, linking multiple parties by video and audio lines, incorporating in-person hubs and also individuals in the community that had been provided with I-Pads to access the videoconference and providing simultaneous interpretation made the logistical arrangements much more complex than for the NIRB's Technical Meeting, and it is unfair to compare the two proceedings without acknowledging the significant differences.

**3. The Impact of COVID-19 Restrictions on In-Person Proceedings**

Your comment that COVID-19 restrictions are not relevant to the NWB's process for conducting meetings is unfair. Throughout the pandemic, the NWB, like all other decision-makers that conduct in-person proceedings, have had to modify, postpone and even cancel their proceedings to ensure compliance with public health restrictions on non-essential

travel into and within Nunavut and restrictions on indoor public gatherings. The pandemic has resulted in the Board relying on remote access technologies to provide alternatives to in-person proceedings, while recognizing the limits of bandwidth, availability of technology to community members, difficulties with providing simultaneous interpretation, etc. The Board continues to learn in practice what is and is not feasible with these constraints, and is constantly working to make the adjustments necessary to preserve the health and safety of participants and communities, while at the same time providing timely consideration of applications in accordance with our legislated timelines.

During the Board's processing of this Application the in-person community session originally planned for November 30, 2020, had to be postponed when all indoor public gatherings were banned in response to the confirmation of COVID-19 cases in Rankin Inlet. The restrictions on indoor public gatherings in Rankin Inlet were only relaxed on January 11, 2021. When it became possible for community members to gather in-person in the hubs, the Board was unable to make arrangements to have NWB staff, including the Board's interpreter, travel into the community, but was able to work with Agnico Eagle for them to provide the in-person hubs that were used on January 19th. The Board was not advised that the first COVID-19 vaccination clinic was occurring in Rankin Inlet until the morning of January 19 when Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated advised the NWB during the Pre-Hearing Conference for the file. While the Board understands the clinic may have limited the attendance of some community members, the Board did not wish to cancel the community session at the last minute, and is appreciative of the community members, who came out and participated in the hubs or on the I-Pads during these unprecedented times.

In closing, the NWB emphasizes that the community session was the first public session associated with the Application, the main purpose of which was to gain an understanding of community interest and concern in relation to the Application to inform the Board's decision as to the form and timing of the potential Public Hearing for the Application. The NWB clearly heard from the community and the Kivalliq Inuit Association that there is a high level of interest in Agnico Eagle's Application and is considering options for providing additional opportunities for community feedback. Additional details will be provided as the Board identifies these options.

I trust this information responds to your e-mail. Please let me know if you have any other questions or concerns. If you have not already done so, I invite you to contact Richard Dwyer, the NWB's Manager of Licensing, at [richard.dwyer@nwb-oen.ca](mailto:richard.dwyer@nwb-oen.ca) and ask to be placed on the NWB's Distribution List for the file so that you can receive any future application materials, monitoring reports, comment submissions from parties and notices and direction from the NWB regarding the Water Licence and amendments.

Sincerely,

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Stephanie Autut  
Executive Director  
Nunavut Water Board

## Copy Meliadine Distribution List