

Re: Nunavut Inuit should be wary of ever-evolving mine plans

This Nunavut Water Board correspondence provides clarifications and corrections to the characterization of the scope, process and procedure associated with the NWB's recent decision in respect of an emergency amendment to the Meliadine Type "A" Water Licence No: 2AM-MEL1631 that was referenced in Ms. Scottie's May 28, 2020, letter to the editor.

While the board appreciates the media and members of the public drawing attention to the water licensing process and expressing their concerns with specific licensing applications, the NWB also thinks it is important that these discussions be based on accurate and complete information. The NWB provides this letter to correct some of the facts outlined in the letter and to explain the NWB licensing process and outcome associated with the NWB's consideration of the emergency amendment referenced in the letter.

First and foremost, the NWB offers the following correction: the emergency amendment did not involve a "new water licence," as suggested in the letter. More specifically, the release of water from the approved containment pond (CP1) into Meliadine Lake was approved in 2016 when the water licence was originally issued for the development, operation and reclamation of the Meliadine gold mine. Since 2016, discharges from CP1 into Meliadine Lake have taken place on an annual basis as authorized under the licence.

However, this year due to high volumes of surface runoff and various conditions at the Meliadine gold mine site, Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd. applied in January 2020 for an emergency amendment that would allow the levels of Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) in the water that would be



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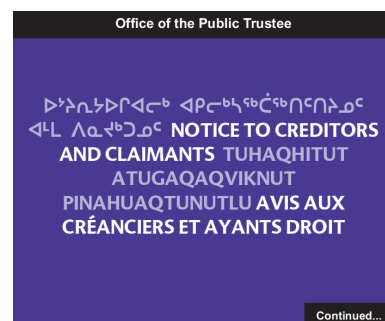
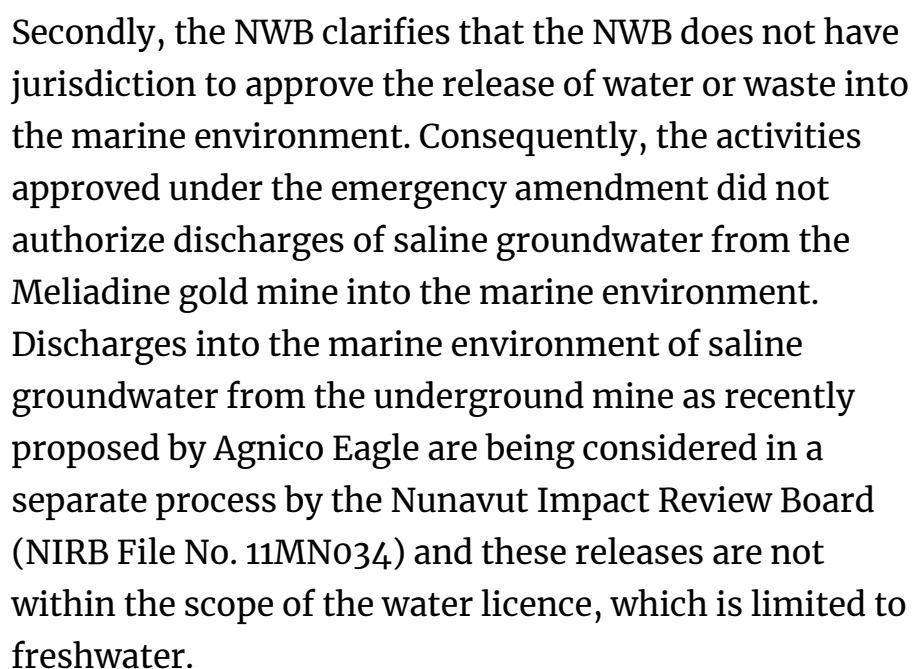
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The scope of the emergency amendment sought by Agnico Eagle was limited to the temporary discharge in 2020 of the treated, non-toxic process water from Containment Pond 1 (CP1) into Meliadine Lake that would exceed the TDS limit in the existing licence via the previously approved Meliadine Lake outfall diffuser.



Thirdly, the NWB highlights that the board's recommendation to the Minister of Northern Affairs that this amendment be considered on an emergency basis was based on the NWB's consideration of the following circumstances:

- The discharge from CP1 was urgently required this spring to lower the levels in the pond to avoid permanent damage to the pond and associated water management infrastructure at the site.
- If the excess water in CP1 could not be discharged to Meliadine Lake during the spring freshet in 2020, damage to the pond and infrastructure could result, which increased the potential for uncontrolled releases or other negative impacts on Meliadine Lake.
- Mandatory notice provisions and regulated timelines associated with the NWB's normal processing of a Type "A" Water Licence mean that nine to 12 months is normally required for the NWB and the Minister of Northern Affairs to review and complete decision-making for this type of amendment, which would, in this case, have been several months after the spring freshet (expected to occur in May 2020).
- During the technical review of the Emergency Amendment, the Kivalliq Inuit Association and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada acknowledged that the discharge from CP1 was required during the 2020 spring freshet to avoid the potential for damage to the pond and water management infrastructure.

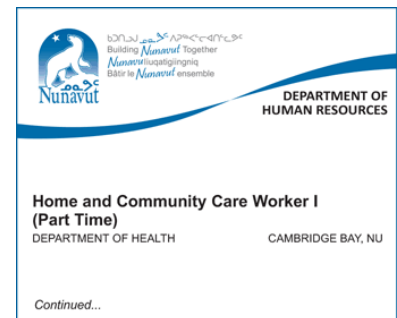




Fourthly, the NWB also wishes to clarify that although the NWB's consideration of the amendment application and participation of interested parties and members of the public was conducted in a manner that reflected the urgent circumstances of the request, there was still thorough and rigorous technical review of the amendment request conducted by the NWB and by representatives from the Kivalliq Inuit Association, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, and Environment and Climate Change Canada.

The NWB notes that the technical review of the emergency amendment also reflected the limits on travel and public gatherings in Nunavut resulting from public health measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) pandemic. Reflecting these circumstances, the NWB's consideration of the emergency amendment consisted of a combination of both written comment submissions and teleconferences.

In terms of transparency, the NWB's normal practice for providing public access to information about an amendment application was followed, with the Emergency Amendment and all associated documentation filed by Agnico Eagle being made available through the NWB's ftp site.



All written submissions filed with the NWB by interveners during the technical review of the Emergency Amendment [are available here](#).

In addition, specific information about the teleconference meeting to discuss technical comment submissions about the emergency amendment was posted to the NWB's registry and was sent in advance directly to the distribution list for the Meliadine file, which includes several local Kivalliq organizations. The teleconference call-in information was provided, and anyone wishing to participate was welcome to call into the meeting.

Further, the NWB noted that a high level of public interest and concern was expressed to the Board about the discharges into Meliadine Lake. Therefore, the NWB recommended that Agnico Eagle take additional measures to inform the public about the discharges from CP1 over the course of this summer. Specifically, the NWB recommended Agnico Eagle consider measures such as posting information on Facebook or other social media platforms that are readily available to community members.

In closing, the NWB's also highlights that the amendments to the existing water licence to authorize the temporary discharges in 2020 also require Agnico Eagle to implement an additional monitoring program specifically developed to monitor the potential for effects during the 2020 discharge. The monitoring program was developed by Agnico Eagle and was modified by the NWB to reflect changes proposed by the Kivalliq Inuit Association, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, and Environment and Climate Change Canada during the technical review of the Emergency Amendment.

Additionally, a specific water management working group consisting of Agnico Eagle, Kivalliq Inuit Association, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and the NWB has been established to review the discharges and ongoing monitoring results during the 2020 season. The working group will be fulfilling this role via ongoing regular teleconference meetings while the discharges occur over the summer.

The NWB appreciates being given this opportunity to provide these corrections and clarifications of the Board's water licensing process. The NWB invites any party having specific questions about the topics addressed in this letter, or more generally, in relation to the NWB's regulatory role with respect to the Meliadine gold mine, to please contact me, Stephanie Autut, the NWB's executive director, by email at stephanie.autut@nwb-oen.ca.

Stephanie Autut
Executive Director, Nunavut Water Board

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Posted by just an inuk on 3 June, 2020

I'm sure this was not relayed to the community in plain English during the consultations. Speak plain English and straight to the point!

"the release of water from the approved containment pond (CP1) into Meliadine Lake was approved in 2016 when the water licence was originally issued for the development, operation and reclamation of the Meliadine gold mine. Since 2016, discharges from CP1 into Meliadine Lake have taken place on an annual basis as authorized under the licence."

Agnico Eagle recently submitted two proposals to the NIRB, its "2020 Saline Discharge Strategy" proposal and the "Saline Effluent Discharge to Marine Environment" proposal.

Agnico Eagle said it wants to stop trucking effluent from its Meliadine gold mine to the coast and instead lay down about 40 kilometres of double pipes to carry salty water from the mine to Melvin Bay.

Why are the residents of Rankin unaware of this? That they are already dumping by trucks to the coast.

You don't need to write a novel , short and simple is what we understand.

Posted by Transparency Needed on 4 June, 2020

Clarity and transparency and the ability to find associated documents would be improved if the Nunavut Water Board had a public registry that was easy to navigate and search rather than the cryptic file trees they have in their FTP site.

Posted by Tagak Curley on 4 June, 2020

I never thought a public regulatory agency created by Nunavut Agreement , supposedly neutral body, would come out swinging seemingly appeared to be defending its decision in favour of AEM. AEM technical case submitted to NWB claimed emergency when there isn't one.

NWB at its recent deliberations did not accept anyone of several KIA's recommendations which would in effect would have directed AEM to do more to prevent any possible over flow of the CP1 containment pit during freshet. Furthermore KIA strongly urged that Rankinmuit be consulted not only by AEM but by NWB as well. NWB failed to mention those points in their lengthy clarification article in NN.

It is very important to be heard as well. As of the Intervenor KIA did not fully support that all of the effluent in CP1 containing waste water from the mine plus over three times more of the TDS than it is allowed in their current water license. This waste water does not belong in the Melaidine Lake it is fishing lake for Rankinmuit.

Posted by Casual Commenter on 6 June, 2020

Ms. Autut is parroting what the company said is the source of the water – she is taking their word at par without further investigation which is shameful. Plenty of evidence and questions were raised during even the NWB deliberations and the issues raised pertaining to the true source of TDS in CP-1 were overlooked. It should be remembered that Ms. Autut and the NWB team do not have to drink the water in Rankin Inlet.

Posted by Sedna on 6 June, 2020

Stephanie Autut is referencing an increase of run-off water, but she is omitting that the company had to STOP dumping water last year because the TDS exceeded regulatory allowances, something that has not changed. The only difference now is that Ms. Autut has given permission, against the will of Rankin Inlet, for the mining company to dump water into our freshwater lake which is used for

fishing and drinking. Absolutely unforgivable and tragically shameful.

Posted by Abraham Tagalik on 9 June, 2020

Thank you for the clarification. It is very informative and fact based and laid out in a timeline that is understandable. I commend the NWB Board for their work in guiding you with this work. Keep it up.

Comments are closed.

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