



NEWS RELEASE

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Nunavut Impact Review Board Issues Final Hearing Report Following Environmental Review of Baffinland Iron Mines Corp. Mary River Project Proposal

CAMBRIDGE BAY, NU – September 14, 2012 – The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or the Board) has completed its environmental review of Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation's Mary River Project Proposal (the Project Proposal) and submitted its Final Hearing Report, including recommendations, to the federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada for his review and decision. After a thorough review of the potential ecosystemic and socio-economic impacts of the Project Proposal, the Board has concluded that the Mary River Project may proceed, in accordance with the terms and conditions recommended in the Final Hearing Report.

The Mary River Project Proposal involves the development of an open pit iron ore mine on northern Baffin Island, with associated infrastructure to include a tote road between Milne Inlet and a mine site at Mary River, ports at Milne Inlet and Steensby Inlet and a railway connecting the mine to the Steensby port. Iron ore will be transported from the mine site via the railway to the port at Steensby Inlet, with year-round shipping of ore through Foxe Basin and Hudson Strait to markets in Europe using custom designed ore carriers.

An assessment of the Project Proposal was initiated by the NIRB following release of a positive conformity determination by the Nunavut Planning Commission in accordance with the North Baffin Regional Land Use Plan on April 30, 2008. Since that time, the Project Proposal has progressed through the NIRB's Screening and Review processes under Article 12 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, with numerous community visits, technical meetings and opportunities for the public and interested parties to participate and provide their input to the Board, leading to a Final Hearing in the communities of Iqaluit, Igloolik and Pond Inlet on July 16-28, 2012.

In completing the Board's review of the Project Proposal, the NIRB considered the information contained within the draft and final Environmental Impact Statements filed by Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation, as well as the substantial written comments, information requests and final written submissions filed by federal, territorial and local government, designated Inuit organizations and members of the public throughout the course of the Review. The NIRB also carefully considered comments, evidence and advice from community representatives, members of the public and formal intervenors throughout the Review, including hearing from over 150 people who appeared on the record during the NIRB's Final Hearing.

The Final Hearing Report, which includes an executive summary, is available from the NIRB public registry at the following location:

<http://ftp.nirb.ca/02-REVIEWS/ACTIVE%20REVIEWS/08MN053-BAFFINLAND%20MARY%20RIVER/2-REVIEW/10-FINAL%20HEARING%20DECISION/>

Translated versions of the Report are being prepared in Inuktitut and French and will be posted on the online public registry as soon as they become available.

Reflecting the Board's primary objectives under the NLCA of protecting and promoting the current and future well-being of all Nunavummiut and Canadians, and protecting the ecosystemic integrity of the Nunavut Settlement Area, key recommendations in the Report include the following:

- establishment of key working groups in relation to the marine environment and the terrestrial environment, and new duties for the existing Qikiqtaaluk Socio-Economic Monitoring Committee in relation to the socio-economic environment. These groups will provide direction and guidance regarding: adding to baseline information during construction and before project operations commence; monitoring and reporting regarding effects occurring during operations; and providing advice regarding changes that may be required to make sure the management of negative impacts is effective and that lasting damage is prevented;
- ensuring that the communities that experience project effects are consulted on an ongoing basis throughout the life of the Project regarding the best ways to prevent and limit negative effects;
- requiring that centralized access to project information be provided, including monitoring and regulatory information as it is produced;
- imposing limits on the total number of ships travelling the shipping route during the open water season.

The Board's Review process, the Final Hearing Report and associated recommendations benefitted enormously from all those who shared their experiences, knowledge and Inuit Qaujimaningit with the Board, and the NIRB wishes to extend its sincere thanks to everyone who participated in the assessment of the Project Proposal. If the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada accepts the NIRB's report and agrees that the Mary River Project can proceed, the NIRB will continue to work with all parties to establish a monitoring program for the life of the project that will provide oversight and ensure the Project complies with the specific terms and conditions of the Board's Project Certificate.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Copland
Acting Chairperson
Nunavut Impact Review Board

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