



NEWS RELEASE

NIRB File No. 16MN056

Nunavut Impact Review Board Issues Reconsideration Report and Recommendations for Agnico Eagle Mines Limited’s “Whale Tail Pit Expansion Proposal”

CAMBRIDGE BAY, NU – October 18, 2019 – The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) has issued a Reconsideration Report and Recommendations to present the findings of the Board’s assessment of Agnico Eagle Mines Limited’s (Agnico Eagle) “Whale Tail Pit Expansion Proposal” (Expansion Proposal). As set out in detail within the Board’s Report, the NIRB’s assessment has reviewed and considered the technical issues, concerns and all information provided to the Board throughout the assessment of the Whale Tail Pit Expansion Proposal; **the NIRB has concluded that if conducted in accordance with the Board’s recommendations, this proposed amendment to the Whale Tail Pit Project may proceed to the licensing and permitting regulatory phase.**

The Expansion Proposal proposes modifications to the previously-approved Whale Tail Pit Project (NIRB File No. 16MN056), located at the Amaruq property on Inuit-owned lands, approximately 150 kilometres (km) north of Baker Lake and 50 km northwest of the existing Meadowbank Gold Mine. The scope of the Expansion Proposal includes four (4) main components:

- expanding the size of the Whale Tail open pit (from that which was previously-assessed and approved for the Whale Tail Pit Project);
- development of an additional open pit (IVR pit);
- development of associated IVR Waste Rock Storage Facility and IVR Attenuation Pond; and;
- underground mining operations at both the Whale Tail and IVR deposits.

Processing of the ore mined from the expanded Whale Tail Pit, new IVR Pit and additional underground operations would take place at the existing Meadowbank Gold Mine site, using the existing mill and tailings management infrastructure. The ore would be trucked daily from the Whale Tail site via an existing 65 km private haul road. Agnico Eagle proposes to upgrade the haul road from the currently approved width of 9 metres (m) to 15 m and use the existing marine shipping infrastructure in Baker Lake to support shipment of materials required for construction of the Expansion Proposal components as well as annual resupply of fuel.

Construction of the Expansion Proposal would begin as early as mid-2020, with expansion of the Whale Tail Pit and construction of IVR infrastructure. Operations at the expanded Whale Tail Pit, IVR Pit and underground mining would commence in 2021 and continue into 2026. Construction and operations would be followed by site closure and remediation, beginning in 2026, and continuing until approximately 2051, followed by post-closure monitoring of the site.

The assessment process provided numerous opportunities for interested parties to provide technical comments, identify issues and concerns, ask questions, provide information and share perspectives regarding the potential (positive and negative) ecosystemic and socio-economic effects of the Expansion Proposal. Participants included Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and the Kivalliq Inuit Association, the Baker Lake Hunters and Trappers Organization, the Government of Nunavut, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Health Canada and Natural Resources Canada. Members of the public and community representatives from the Kivalliq Region communities of Arviat, Baker Lake, Chesterfield Inlet, Coral Harbour, Nauyasat, Rankin Inlet and Whale Cove, also actively contributed throughout the Board’s assessment.

Throughout this assessment, the Board heard that there was general support for the additional and continued employment opportunities and economic benefits associated with the Expansion Proposal. However, the Board also heard concerns expressed about the potential for effects (including cumulative effects) on the terrestrial ecosystem and wildlife (particularly on caribou) resulting from the proposed widening and intensified and prolonged use of the Whale Tail haul road associated with the transport of additional ore for processing at the existing Meadowbank Gold Mine site. The potential for increases in air emissions (dust and nitrogen dioxide specifically) resulting from the Expansion Proposal were also thoroughly discussed. The Board noted concerns about the potential for effects to surface water and groundwater quality and quantity resulting from the proposed expansion of the Whale Tail Pit and addition of the IVR pit, including temporal extension of activities, the need for alternative discharge locations and eventual closure planning. The Board also heard concerns regarding existing labour and employment monitoring requirements and the adequacy of socio-economic closure planning.

A number of required changes and additions to the existing Terms and Conditions of Project Certificate No. 008 and the monitoring program for the approved project were identified in the Board's Report, including:

- mitigation and monitoring measures required to limit the potential for the Expansion Proposal to have effects on caribou;
- addition of continuous monitoring of nitrogen dioxide to the existing air quality monitoring program;
- requirements for further assessment of alternative discharge locations for treated mine effluent;
- gender specific monitoring requirements and socio-economic closure planning;
- annual reporting requirements for fulfillment of Proponent commitments; and
- Updates to all relevant management plans to reflect the scale and scope of the Expansion Proposal and potential impacts.

In closing, the Board is grateful to all who shared their experiences, expertise and perspectives to assist us in completing a thorough and timely assessment of the Expansion Proposal. The NIRB recognizes and appreciates the positive, collaborative, and respectful contributions of all who continue to work together to ensure that the Whale Tail Pit Project delivers lasting economic benefits to the Kivalliq Region while minimizing the potential for adverse ecosystemic and socio-economic effects.

The Reconsideration Report, which includes an executive summary, is available from the NIRB's online public registry at www.nirb.ca/project/125418.

Sincerely,



Kaviq Kaluraq
Acting Chairperson
Nunavut Impact Review Board

For more information, the media may contact:

Ryan Barry, Executive Director
Nunavut Impact Review Board
1-866-233-3033 or rbarry@nirb.ca