

Environmental Protection Operations  
Qimugjuk Building 969 P.O. Box 1870  
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0  
Tel: (867) 975-4639  
Fax: (867) 975-4645

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EC File: 4703 001 015  
NWB File: 2BE-MEA0813

Phyllis Beaulieu  
Manager of Licensing  
Nunavut Water Board  
P.O. Box 119  
Gjoa Haven, NU X0B 1J0

Via email: [licensing@nunavutwaterboard.org](mailto:licensing@nunavutwaterboard.org)

**RE: 2BE-MEA0813 Amendment Application, Distribution of Additional Information**

Environment Canada (EC) has reviewed the above-mentioned amendment application submitted to the Nunavut Water Board (NWB). The following specialist advice has been provided pursuant to the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*, Section 36(3) of the *Fisheries Act*, the *Migratory Birds Convention Act*, and the *Species at Risk Act*.

Agnico-Eagle Mines Ltd. (AEM) recently applied to amend their existing Type 'B' water licence 2BE-MEA0813 for their Meadowbank Exploration Project, located approximately 70 km north of the Hamlet of Baker Lake within the Kivalliq Region, Nunavut. Activities at the camp include camp operation, mineral exploration, prospecting, geological mapping, geophysical surveys, diamond drilling, fuel vault installation, airstrip construction, baseline data collection, trenching and the installation of a Bulk Fuel Storage Tank with a nominal capacity of five million litres.

The amendment requested the Board issue a blanket authorization for drilling activities occurring within the 30-m high water mark which is contrary to Part F (1) of the existing water licence. Under the existing licence, drilling within this area requires approval by the Board on a case by case basis.

EC submitted comments to NWB related to AEM's amendment request on July 7, 2011. In our response, we requested the proponent provide the number of holes it plans to drill within the 30-m high water mark, the location of each hole and its distance from the nearest water body. EC also requested the proponent provide a list of its erosion and runoff control measures to ensure drilling activities within the 30-m high water mark do not perturb adjacent aquatic ecosystems nor the integrity of the surrounding tundra, including permafrost.

In their response to the NWB, AEM did not provide any details with respect to the number or locations of holes it plans to drill within the 30-m high water mark. With respect to mitigation, AEM committed to drilling within the 30-m high water mark *only* during the winter, disposing drilling wastes above the 30-m mark and establishing water quality at the nearest water body to the drill site prior to and following completion of drilling.

In addition to these mitigation measures, to protect against thermal erosion in the next thaw season, EC recommends AEM commit to causing no disturbance to surface materials (apart from

the drill hole itself) such as scraping of surficial materials nor subsequent exposure of ice lenses or saturated frozen areas underlying the surficial materials in the area adjacent to any water body.

Further, while EC commends AEM's commitment to conduct water monitoring at the nearest water body pre- and post-drilling, due to logistical challenges with winter sampling EC recommends sampling efforts be focused in the summer season. To that end, EC recommends AEM undertake an aerial or ground survey of drilled sites to verify their stability and visually inspect adjacent water bodies for turbidity. If turbidity is visible in any water bodies adjacent to drill sites, EC recommends sampling be undertaken to determine whether any further mitigation is required.

EC apologizes for the delay in providing our comments and hope they will still be useful to the Board in rendering their decision related to AEM's amendment request.

If there are any changes in the project EC should be notified as further review may be necessary. If you have any questions related to the foregoing, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (867) 975-4639 or email at [Allison.Dunn@ec.gc.ca](mailto:Allison.Dunn@ec.gc.ca).

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Allison D", followed by a long horizontal line.

Allison Dunn  
Sr. Environmental Assessment Coordinator

cc: Carey Ogilvie (Head, Environmental Assessment-North, EPO, EC, Yellowknife, NT)  
Anne Wilson (Sector Specialist, EPO, EC, Edmonton, AB)