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KAVAMALIQUIYIKKUT

Ministère de l'Exécutif et des Affaires Intergouvernementales

Department of Executive & Intergovernmental Affairs

October 29th, 2008

Leslie Payette
Manager of Environmental Administration
Nunavut Impact Review Board
P.O Box 1360
Cambridge Bay, NU X0B 0C0

Via e-mail to: lpayette@nirb.ca

Dear Ms. Payette,

RE: NIRB 08EN037 - Uravan Minerals Inc – Comments on Draft Scope of Review

The Government of Nunavut (GN) thanks the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) for the opportunity to provide input on the draft scope of review for the Uravan Minerals Inc. Garry Lake Project.

We reiterate our screening comments to NIRB that in the absence of up-to-date land use plans, environmental assessment will be forced to continue addressing broad land use issues in the context of specific projects. Additional pieces of the territory's resource management system are also missing, including implementation of key special management areas of the Thelon Game Sanctuary Management Plan. Until these issues are resolved, the GN remains concerned about the potential for cumulative impacts of projects to the Beverly herd and the potential effects on Inuit harvesting and human health.

The GN agrees with NIRB and the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC) that a thorough yet expeditious review of the Garry Lake Project is desirable. The GN understands this is the intent of limiting the scope of the impact assessment to the areas identified in NIRB's October 8, 2008 correspondence, including:

- *Impacts of the project activities to caribou, with particular emphasis on calving activities;*
- *Potential impacts to wildlife habitat, particularly the caribou calving grounds of the Beverly herd;*
- *Potential cumulative impacts of this project, in relation to other similar*

projects in the region, to caribou, caribou calving grounds, and across caribou ranges:

- *Other impacts to wildlife including raptor nesting areas, potential human-carnivore conflicts and aircraft disturbances.*

We note that the scope of assessment as outline above should provide more guidance on important issues of concern to the GN, including the potential cumulative impacts of the project on Inuit and Nunavummiut in relation to socio-economic and health concerns. In particular, the cumulative impacts of development activity may impact on local country food consumption, as the health of caribou and health of Nunavummiut are intimately linked. As outlined in the attached comments, the GN believes that changes to health of the Beverly Caribou Herd may have potential to impact on the socio-economic and health status of residents of the Kivalliq region and for this reason they should be included in the scope of assessment.

Additional scoping comments are provided in Appendices A and B on behalf of the Department of Environment, Health and Social Services and Economic Development and Transportation.

In light of cumulative impact concerns for the Garry Lake Project and the large geographical scope of potential cumulative impacts, the GN does not believe it is Uraivan's responsibility to conduct primary research into current baseline conditions beyond what is reasonable for a project of this size. However, the GN believes it remains the responsibility of the proponent to use available evidence to fully describe the anticipated impacts of the project to NIRB in accordance with Section 12.5.2 of the NLCA.

As of October 28, 2008 the GN had not received draft guidelines on which to comment prior to the November 5 – 7 scoping meetings in Baker Lake. Since adequate time is needed to ensure careful consideration of the draft guidelines, GN officials attending the meetings will not be in a position to provide "on the record" input.

In regard to October 27, 2008 correspondence from Stephanie Autut to Larry Lahusen regarding the proponent's attendance at the Baker Lake workshop, the GN believes the presence of Uranvan would add value to the proceedings and encourages the proponent to attend.

The GN believes that all stakeholders need to be proactive to solve land use issues which is why we also recommended that NIRB ensures that all relevant parties (i.e., GN, NIRB, NWMB, NPC, KIA, INAC and proponents) work together to determine how best to address the cumulative social and environmental impacts on a regional scale and provide NIRB with the necessary information and assistance to assess cumulative effects on the Beverly caribou herd.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Josh Gladstone, Avatiliriniq Coordinator, at jgladstone@gov.nu.ca, or Michael Mifflin, Manager of Land Use & Environmental Assessment, at mmifflin@gov.nu.ca.

Yours truly,

Original signed by

David Omilgoitok
Deputy Minister

Attachments: Map of known caribou calving areas in Nunavut
Map of known caribou crossings in Nunavut

Cc: Jeff Rusk, NIRB

Appendix A:

Government of Nunavut Comments on Draft Scope of Review for Uravan Minerals Inc.'s Garry Lake Project

On October 8, 2008 the Nunavut Impact Review Board requested input on its proposed draft scope of review for the Garry Lake Project. The GN agrees with NIRB and the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs that a thorough yet expeditious review of the Garry Lake Project is desirable, and understands this is the intent of limiting the scope of the impact assessment to the areas identified, including:

- *Impacts of the project activities to caribou, with particular emphasis on calving activities;*
- *Potential impacts to wildlife habitat, particularly the caribou calving grounds of the Beverly herd;*
- *Potential cumulative impacts of this project, in relation to other similar projects in the region, to caribou, caribou calving grounds, and across caribou ranges;*
- *Other impacts to wildlife including raptor nesting areas, potential human-carnivore conflicts and aircraft disturbances.*

The GN offers the following comments in relation to the scope outlined above, with specific reference to:

1. Which components of the project to include in the review
2. The temporal and spatial boundaries of the project
3. The issues and concerns to be considered in the review

1. Which components of the project to include in the review

The GN agrees with the project components that NIRB has identified:

- Exploration for uranium mineralization,
- Construction and operation of camp sites,
- Ground transportation,
- Airborne transportation,
- Transport and storage of fuel,
- Water usage,
- Disposal of wastes,
- Road Construction (all weather and or temporary, jurisdiction)

2. The temporal and spatial boundaries of the project

The Government of Nunavut's Department of Environment (DOE) believes that two categories of spatial boundaries should be considered in this assessment — a Local Study Area and a Regional Study Area.

DOE recommends that the spatial borders of the Local Study Area be defined as the Beverly caribou herd calving area, and that the spatial borders of the Regional Study Area be defined as the entire range of the Beverly caribou herd taking into account the four projects identified by NIRB (08EA038 , 08EN015, 08EN022, 08EN024) as well as all exploration and development projects that the Beverly caribou herd might come in contact with across its range:

a) Calving and post-calving areas: Exploration and development activity in or near calving or post calving grounds of the Beverly caribou herd within Nunavut.

b) Migration corridor: Exploration and development activity in the Thelon Geological Basin ie: through Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.

The Board may also wish to consider the impacts of exploration and development activity in the Upper Thelon Watershed of the NWT and the Athabasca Region of northern Saskatchewan (ie: the winter range) on the Beverly herd.

DOE has attached a map defining the known borders of the Beverly Calving Area based on the most recent studies available. Additionally we have appended two maps identifying known caribou water crossings. The GN encourages NIRB to seek further information on the herd from the GNWT Department of Resources , Wildlife & Economic Development.

3. The issues and concerns to be considered in the review

The GN offers the following comments on scoping list provided by NIRB in its October 8, 2008 correspondence including:

a) Biophysical environment, including hydrology and hydrogeology; groundwater quality; surface water and sediment quality; atmosphere (including climate change, air quality, and noise factors); landforms and soils; and vegetation;

Comment: The GN has no comment on this topic at this time.

b) Caribou, with particular emphasis on caribou calving activities;

Comment: The GN has no comment on this topic at this time

Comment: The Department of Environment believes this section should be expanded to include effects at the individual and herd level.

c) Caribou habitat, particularly the caribou calving grounds of the Beverly herd;

Comment: The GN has no comment on this topic at this time.

d) Human/carnivore interactions;

Comment: The GN has no comment on this topic at this time.

e) Raptor nesting areas;

Comment: The GN has no comment on this topic at this time.

f) Cumulative effects of the project in relation to other similar projects in the region, to caribou, caribou calving grounds, and across caribou ranges;

Comment 1: The Department of Environment believes this section should be expanded to include effects at the individual level, herd level, and caribou-human system level. DOE has attached a list of questions relating to cumulative effects assessment to assist in discussions at the Baker Lake scoping meetings. These are attached as Appendix B.

Comment 2: The Department of Environment strongly believes in the importance of assessing the cumulative impacts of multiple development projects across the range of the Beverly caribou herd.

In its screening decision for the Garry Lake Project NIRB indicated that *“Parties have expressed cumulative effects concerns regarding projects in this region on numerous occasions. Subsequent recommendations from the NIRB regarding these concerns have been forwarded to the Minister in previous Board decisions, specifically 08EN024 (UR Energy Inc.), 08EN015 (Cameco Corporation – Turqavik-Aberdeen), 08EN022 (Coronation Minerals), and 08EA038 (Pacific Ridge Exploration Ltd.); and included the following recommendation:*

Territorial and federal government agencies in Nunavut should work together with Regional Inuit Associations, co-management boards and industry to develop an action plan to identify and mitigate potential cumulative effects of human land use activities, including mineral exploration, on barren-ground caribou. This assessment of cumulative effects should occur at a regional scale (i.e. larger than individual project areas).

On June 9th in response to NIRB's invitation for further comments DOE indicated that a regional cumulative effects study should be conducted on the status and sustainability of the Beverly caribou herd, taking into account projects across the Beverly caribou range.

g) Inuit harvesting;

Comment: The Department of Economic Development & Transportation believes this section should be adjusted to include the direct and cumulative impacts of project activities on the local economy and community livelihoods, including Inuit harvesting and tourism.

h) Transboundary effects;

Comment: The GN has no comment on this topic at this time.

i) Traditional knowledge;

Comment: The GN has no comment on this topic at this time.

j) Other factors

Comment: The Department of Health and Social Services believes that caribou constitute an important food source for the people of the Kivalliq Region. Activities with the potential to negatively impact on the ability of people to access this food source should therefore be included in the scope of assessment. Consideration should be given to potential direct and cumulative effects of the project as they relate to local food security, especially through food chain contamination and the availability of caribou for harvesting.

Comment: The Department of Environment recommends the inclusion of an alternative means analysis in the scope of assessment.

Appendix B:
For Discussion
Minimum Information Requirements for Cumulative Social & Environmental Effects Assessment¹

The Department of Environment has attached the following questions on cumulative effects assessment to assist in discussions at the Baker Lake scoping meetings.

At individual level

- How individual caribou are affected by mineral exploration activities (energetic costs of responses to drilling noise or other human activities, restricted access to key water crossings or feeding areas; exposure to contaminants; loss of habitat).
- How development impacts accumulate in caribou through annual movements across range, in a single year and over many years
- How development impacts interact with other impacts (loss of winter range from fires, climate change impacts).
- What level of accumulated impacts affects caribou health. (health of migrating pregnant female caribou, calf survival, chance of pregnancy).

At herd level

- What level of accumulated impacts on individual caribou results in effects at the herd level (such as lower pregnancy rates, lower calf survival, decreasing population, reduced herd health)
- How well caribou herds can adjust to all environmental influences, including human activities.

At level of caribou-human system

- What level of accumulated impacts on caribou herds results in reduced availability of caribou to communities (reduced herd size, changes in migration patterns)
- How well communities can adjust to reduced availability of caribou (dependence on caribou, availability of alternatives)
- What is the loss to communities and outfitters that will occur if caribou are not available for harvest in economic terms, and in terms of the loss of livelihood, negative impacts on community health, and the impact on the culture of the region.
- How well can communities respond to economic pressures resulting from loss of availability of caribou for communities.

¹ Developed by Beverly & Qammanirjuaq Caribou Management Board