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August 20, 2002

The Hon. Robert D. Nault
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
Terrasses de la Chaudière
10 Wellington, North Tower
Hull, Quebec
K1A 0H4

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Dear Minister Nault:

Application of CEAA to Municipal Water License

This is further to the Nunavut Water Board's June 27, 2002, letter to you in response to a June 12 letter from Michelle Johnson, your Department's Kitikmeot/Kivalliq Regional Coordinator, stating that DIAND requires an environmental assessment under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA)* of the Hamlet of Cambridge Bay's recent water license application. The Nunavut Water Board's letter advises you that the water license application is exempt from screening under CEAA. NTI agrees.

As a legal matter, the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* (NLCA) details an exhaustive environmental assessment regime which provides for one screening authority in Nunavut – the NIRB. Even if this were not the case, for the Government of Canada to conduct screenings pursuant to the *CEAA* screenings inoperative under section 2.12.12 of the NLCA and section 6(2) of the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act*.

As a purely practical matter, the NIRB is an institution of public government funded by the Government of Canada. Government appointees comprise at least ½ the membership of the NIRB. It is not in the interests of the residents of Nunavut or of Canada as a whole for the Government of Canada to operate a competing screening mechanism in Nunavut pursuant to other legislation.

By letter dated October 10, 1997, NTI provided your Assistant Deputy Minister, Jim Moore, and Mr. Robert Connolly of CEAA with NTI's detailed analysis of the post-land claims environmental regime in Nunavut. To my knowledge, Mr. Moore did not respond to this letter despite NTI's request that discussions begin on this issue at that time so as not to delay the NIRB implementation legislation. Now, five years later, we are at the commencement of discussions on that legislation and have not advanced the resolution of this issue.

We respectfully request that your direct your Department to provide NTI with DIAND's position on this issue, and assuming you are in agreement with the above, to cease conducting screenings in Nunavut pursuant to other legislation.

I look forward to you response.

Sincerely yours,

Cathy Towtongie President, NTI

cc: Thomas Kudloo, Chairperson, Nunavut Water Board Elizabeth Copeland, Acting Chairperson, Nunavut Impact Review Board