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NEWS: Nunavut April 21, 2012 - 1:29 pm

Baffinland urges more collaboration, less nit-picking on Mary River

Requests for too much information risk "pre-empting the environmental assessment process"

NUNATSIAQ NEWS

As the clock ticks towards July's final hearings on the Mary River iron mine project on northern Baffin Island, Baffinland Iron Mines Corp. clearly wants to keep the environmental assessment process moving.

Recent correspondence between Baffinland and the Nunavut Impact Review Board shows Baffinland wants to prevent that process from getting bogged down by requests for more and more information.

Not every question can be answered, because the Mary River project is still in its development phase, Baffinland told NIRB April 19.



Baffinland Iron Mines Corp. officially opened its Iqaluit office last week during the Nunavut Mining Symposium. (PHOTO BY JANE GEORGE)

That's after the regulator gave Baffinland two weeks to respond to requests for additional information on its final environmental impact statement, which also included a suggestion from the Qikiqtani Inuit Association for additional technical meetings before the final hearings.

"In review of the information requests it is evident that requests are often pre-empting the environmental assessment process," said Erik Madsen, Baffinland's vice-president sustainable development, health, safety and environment, told the NIRB.

"This information [is not] required to complete the review of the environmental effects assessment," he said.

Baffinland, a private company now under the control of ArcelorMittal, the European steel-making giant, and a private investment firm, Iron Ore Holdings LP, wants to see the Mary River mine churn out about 18 million tonnes of iron ore a year, which will then be shipped out year-round to markets in Europe and Asia for at least 20 years — and some predict up to 100 years.

Baffinland suggests more collaboration with other regulators and agencies could be a way to resolve specific issues or concerns.

"Baffinland views this approach as a constructive mechanism to foster timely information exchange with regulators and to ensure concerns and requirements are addressed," Madsen said.

This collaboration could involve meetings at regular intervals to review and address concerns arising from the design, construction and operation of the Mary River project facilities and or activities, he said.

But Baffinland can't solve all economic and social problems for people in the communities nearest the proposed mine.

That's because many of those are challenges that "exist already within Nunavut's human environment," Madsen said.

Challenges like lack of housing, low levels of education and work experience and substance abuse are complex issues that "cut across agency mandates and get at the heart of individual, corporate, and broader social responsibility," he said.



CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER – Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) will hold elections for the positions of President December 10, 2012. As such, NTI seeks the services of a Chief Returning Officer (CRO) to coordinate the elections in accordance with NTI Election Rules and Procedures.

The CRO exercises general direction and supervision over the administrative conduct of an election and enforces, on the part of all elections officers, fairness, impartiality and compliance with NTI Election Rules and Procedures. The CRO is also responsible for updating NTI's Inuit enrolment list prior to the election.

More...

"Baffinland believes that the best outcomes will arise from tightly focused, collaborative work that is targeted on specific issues. To accomplish this, Baffinland would like to collaborate with agencies to address concerns and opportunities arising during the design, construction, operations and closure phases of the Mary River Project."

The QIA had asked Baffinland to respond to requests for more information on the project's final EIS before the project moves ahead into final hearings.

Another technical meeting would “improve the format and function of final hearings, particularly technical meetings,” the head of the QIA’s department of major projects Stephen Williamson Bathory said in a March 30 letter to the NIRB.

The QIA also said it found that portions of the final EIS's plain language summaries "inaccurate and confusing."

The QIA said the plain language summaries were too confusing to be labeled “plain language”.

But Baffinland said April 19 the final EIS is “by design both a highly technical and lengthy document” that meets the NIRB guidelines and the requirement for translated summary materials.

Since the submission of its final EIS on the Mary River project, Baffinland has organized and conducted meetings in Arctic Bay, Cape Dorset, Clyde River, Hall Beach, Igloolik, Kimmirut and Pond Inlet.

"The QIA opted to withdraw their attendance from several of these meetings," Madsen noted.

The NIRB also asked the QIA to respond to some requests for information from the GN about the project, such as whether the IIBA, which the QIA is now negotiating with Baffinland, will include money to mitigate effects on the health and wellness of Nunavummiut and offset the resulting costs to the GN.

The QIA responded that it has no responsibility under the IIBA to cover the costs of mitigating those effects and suggested the GN could use tax revenues from the project for that.








































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President's Council of the Federation Library Network

President Eric Akhluq is seeking nominations for the 2013 President's Council of the Federation Library Network.

Nomination Deadline: Friday June 8, 2012
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(10) Comments:

#1. Posted by Joanasie on April 21, 2012

This is the first time Baffinland has fingered QIA. Why now?

One thing to keep in mind is that while Baffinland is touring communities QIA is reviewing the document.

Never before has an RIA invested so much in working with community members on a review - they have committees running in 7 communities all run by a full-time coordinator.

To Baffinland's credit they have also done an impressive job of meeting with communities.

In the end it leaves me wondering what the problem really is here?

#2. Posted by george on April 22, 2012

To Joanasie:

The problem is that people are absolutely opposed to a shipping route through Foxe Basin.

If Baffinland really wants to get mining, then they should be looking to build a port on the other side of Baffin Island.

#3. Posted by Bemused Observer on April 22, 2012

Quote from #2 “The problem is that people are absolutely opposed to a shipping route through Foxe Basin.”

What people? If you're talking about some people in Igloodik and Hall Beach, you may be right. Fortunately, this project is much bigger than Igloodik and Hall Beach, there are five other communities. But even that doesn't really matter because it is NIRB and the minister who get to decide, not "people." That is what the land claim agreement says, the land claim agreement that everyone voted yes to. As long as Igloodik and Hall Beach get adequate financial compensation for their little fishing and hunting areas, which most young people don't even care about, this will be a good process.

#4. Posted by Anomak / Paulybear on April 22, 2012

It is amazing, every time a mining company runs into an agreement they do not want to adhere to, they get publicity to get people to squabble, fight, disagree anything to take the attention away from 'this' agreement they do not want to comply with. Makes it easier on them, they look like the 'good guy' only trying to help, like this quote 'But Baffinland can't solve all economic and social problems for people in the communities nearest the proposed mine.' Of course not, what are we thinking? The mine will do environmental damage to the people, the land, air, and sea and yet they play this card to make our Inuit organizations be questions after all. Baffinland is brining in



NOTICE

OF REINSTATEMENT

NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

By notice on January 6th, 2012, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB or Board) announced that it would conduct a public hearing concerning the establishment of Inuit basic needs levels for beluga, narwhal and walrus in the Nunavut Settlement Area.

More...

