August 25, 2016

Honourable Carolyn Bennett
Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
Terrasses de la Chaudière
10 Wellington, North Tower
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0H4

Dear Minister Bennett,

On January 14-15, 2016, the first-ever Pan-Territorial Assessment and Regulatory Board Forum (Forum) was held in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, with the support of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor). The purpose of the Forum was to enable representatives from regulatory and environmental assessment boards based in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and Yukon (“the Boards”) to share best practices, explore common challenges, and discuss potential solutions. The Forum provided an opportunity to build relationships between organizations that will allow for ongoing support, information sharing, and development of consistent environmental assessment and regulatory approaches across the North, as appropriate.

The specific objectives of the Forum were to:

- Discuss and understand the key challenges facing northern regulatory and environmental assessment boards;
- To learn from individual successes and exchange best practices with respect to common challenges;
- Provide an opportunity for building relationships between the Boards that will allow for ongoing support and information sharing; and
- Identify possible opportunities for developing more consistent approaches to common processes as appropriate.

This Forum built on the varied and substantive work undertaken by the Boards in recent years, individually and through collaborative initiatives in each territory, to make regulatory
and environmental assessment processes more effective, transparent, and consistent, where possible under the various pertinent Land Claim Agreements and legislation. **We encourage the new government to work with the Boards to continue to make meaningful and useful enhancements to resource management systems, by building on and supporting the work the Boards have already been doing.**

Following productive discussions at the Forum, representatives from regulatory and environmental assessment boards across the north identified several key areas to prioritize for follow-up work and discussion at future meetings. The Boards agree that one of the top priorities is to ensure that northern communities and organizations have the capacity to participate effectively in board proceedings, as their active engagement leads to informed decision-making by the Boards. **Toward that end, we resolved to voice our support for government’s efforts in seeking and facilitating participation by stakeholders and aboriginal organizations in resource management decision-making processes.**

A report of the inaugural meeting of the Pan-Territorial Regulatory Board Forum is enclosed and will be made publicly available online. A second Forum is planned for Fall 2016 in Whitehorse, Yukon. This next Forum will provide an opportunity for the Boards to delve deeper into the common issues or challenges identified and advance potential solutions while furthering open communication and cooperation across the territories. **We welcome the continued support of CanNor and the federal government for these collaborative initiatives that support and encourage effectiveness, transparency and consistency, and we look forward to continuing to work together.**

Sincerely, the Chairs of participating Regulatory and Environmental Assessment Boards of the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut.

__________________________
Elizabeth Copland, Chair
Nunavut Impact Review Board
__________________________
John Ondrack, Chair
Environmental Impact Screening Committee

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JoAnne Deneron, Chair
Mackenzie Valley Review Board
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Paul Sullivan, Chair
Gwich’in Land and Water Board
Loralee Johnstone, Chair
Yukon Water Board

Floy Adlem, Acting Chair
Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board

Larry Wallace, Chair
Sahtu Land and Water Board

Violet Camsell-Blondin, Chair
Wek’eezhii Land and Water Board

Jon Pierce, Chair
Environmental Impact Review Board

Wendy Randall, Chair
Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board

(note: not all northern Boards who attended the Forum elected to sign this letter)

C.C:  Minister of the Government of the NWT - Lands
Minister of the Government of the NWT - Environment and Natural Resources
Minister of the Government of the NWT - Industry, Tourism and Investment
Minister of the Government of Nunavut - Economic Development & Transportation
Minister of the Government of Nunavut - Environment
Minister of the Government of Yukon - Energy, Mines and Resources
Minister of the Government of Yukon - Economic Development
Minister of the Government of Yukon - Environment
President - Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency