
July 17, 2020

Erin Kelly
Deputy Minister, Environment and Natural Resources
Government of the Northwest Territories
P.O. Box 1320, 4923 – 52nd Street
Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9

Sent via email

Sylvia Haener
Deputy Minister, Lands
Government of the Northwest Territories
P.O. Box 1320, 4923 – 52nd Street
Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9

Sent via email

Dear Erin Kelly and Sylvia Haener,

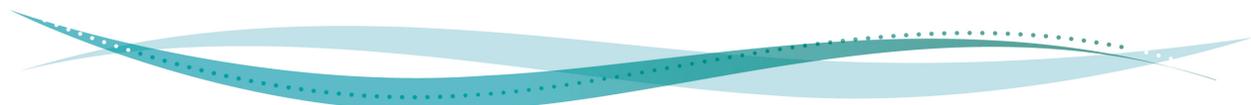
RE: Request for Discontinuance of Non-Specific Comments on Items out for Review on the Online Review System of the Land and Water Boards

The Chairs of the Land and Water Boards of the Mackenzie Valley (the Boards) are writing regarding an ongoing issue with the “standard comments” submitted by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) through the Boards’ Online Review System (ORS).

During the recent Mackenzie Valley Operational Dialogue held in early March 2020, industry participants collectively voiced their concern at the increasing number of standard comments being submitted to the Boards from the GNWT that simply reiterate legislation, don’t provide specific or clear recommendations, and contribute to unnecessary effort for applicants.

This message aligns with the experience of the Boards. Board staff have met with GNWT staff on several occasions over the past 12 months to discuss the necessity of making the public review process helpful, efficient, and effective, and to discuss specific examples of how the GNWT’s standard comments are not contributing to those outcomes. The Regulatory Managers of both the Mackenzie Valley and Wek’èezhìi Land and Water Boards prepared a presentation for a working session with GNWT to again try to support the GNWT in participating effectively in the public review processes.

All Parties continue to experience their respective challenges, so the additional time and effort required for applicants and Board staff to respond to the multitude of standard comments is not an effective use of resources. To illustrate further how the standard comments are not commensurate to the submissions, a [Type B land use permit application for Diavik’s Traditional Knowledge Camp](#) on the south shore of Lac de Gras received 26 comments from the GNWT. These comments included recommendations that: don’t apply to the submission in question (see GNWT#20); reiterate legislative obligations and don’t provide a recommendation (see GNWT#1); appear to have been



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provided without reviewing the relevant management plans or existing standard Land Use Permit conditions resulting in staff having to go back and check these documents an additional time (see GNWT #5); and provide general recommendations that aren't helpful to the Board or proponent in understanding what specific mitigations should be considered (see GNWT#9).

The Chairs of the Boards are now writing to highlight the importance of this issue and to request that GNWT staff take a different approach to participating in the Boards' public review processes. The Boards appreciate the working relationship we have with the GNWT and are confident we can work together to find a resolution that works for all Parties.

We look forward to your reply. Should you have any questions, please contact Shelagh Montgomery, MVLWB Executive Director, at smontgomery@mvlwb.com or (867) 445-2587.

Yours sincerely,



Mavis Cli-Michaud, Chair,
Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board



Elizabeth Wright, Chair,
Gwich'in Land and Water Board



Larry Wallace, Chair,
Sahtu Land and Water Board



Joseph Mackenzie, Chair,
Wek'èzhii Land and Water Board

Copied to: Nathen Richea, A/ADM Environment and Climate Change, Environment and Natural Resources, GNWT
 Lorraine Seale, Director of Securities and Project Assessment, Lands, GNWT
 Scott Stewart, Regional Superintendent, Lands, GNWT

