



NIRB File No. 09MN003

March 2, 2011

Richard Aksawnee
President, Baker Lake HTO
P.O Box 255
Baker Lake, NU
X0C 0A0

Sent via regular mail and fax: (867) 793-2334

Re: Baker Lake HTO Request to Suspend NIRB's Review of the Kiggavik Project Proposal

Dear Richard Aksawnee:

On behalf of the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board), I would like to reply to the concerns raised recently¹ by the Baker Lake Hunters and Trappers Organization (the HTO) regarding the translation of the NIRB's *Revised Draft* Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS Guidelines) for AREVA Resources Canada Inc.'s Kiggavik project proposal. Specifically, the HTO has requested that the NIRB suspend further review of the Kiggavik project proposal until such a time as the *Revised Draft* EIS Guidelines can be properly translated into Inuktitut and a vocabulary can be developed to properly explain to Elders and other unilingual Inuit the issues associated with uranium mining.

The NIRB endeavours to conduct a public review process which encourages effective public participation and, as such, the Board recognizes the importance of providing meaningful Inuktitut translations and interpretation. As the HTO has acknowledged, there are a number of difficulties associated with translating technical terminology from English into Inuktitut; many terms have no Inuktitut equivalents. EIS Guidelines are highly technical in nature and written as instructions to project proponents and not to a public audience. To date these documents have not been translated into Inuktitut by the NIRB and proponents have not been required to submit an EIS which is fully translated into Inuktitut, but instead must translate the popular and executive summaries which are less technical in nature.

¹ Baker Lake HTO letter to NIRB regarding comments on the Revised Draft Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for AREVA Resources Canada Inc.'s Kiggavik Project (NIRB File No. 09MN003) - *enclosed*

Upon consideration of similar requests made recently to the NIRB for translation of its project-specific EIS Guidelines², the NIRB encountered difficulties with the translation of multiple sections which involve technical concepts and terminology that do not readily translate into Inuktitut. As such, the Board has recently requested assistance with this initiative from the Director of Official Languages with the Government of Nunavut department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth (CLEY) in a letter dated November 16, 2010. In response, CLEY suggested that the NIRB approach the Nunavut Research Institute (NRI) which maintains a database of research terminology. Although NRI was able to provide the NIRB with a copy of “Katiguiniq: A Compilation of Terminology Related to Environmental Contaminants”, this document was of limited use for the task of translating EIS Guidelines for the Kiggavik project, as it contained few terms or concepts pertaining to uranium and uranium mining issues.

Although the NIRB continues to seek the use of appropriate terminology for its environmental assessment functions, the Board is not equipped to develop new Inuktitut terminology and is unsure whether meaningful translations of these technical aspects of the *Revised Draft* EIS Guidelines can be completed at present. As such, suspending the Board’s review of the Kiggavik project proposal would not appear to be feasible at this time, given that such a delay could prove to be indefinite.

Operating in Nunavut, where the majority of the public speaks Inuktitut, the Board recognizes that interpreter/translators play a vital role in enabling Inuit and scientists to communicate effectively about technical issues. The NIRB has committed to ensuring the interpreter/translators it contracts for public meetings are provided with presentation materials in advance and have adequate opportunity to discuss the associated concepts and terminology with NIRB’s technical staff so that they might be comfortable providing simultaneous Inuktitut interpretation for the Board. In addition, the NIRB is endeavouring to maximize its use of descriptive plain language to make technical concepts as accessible as possible and will encourage participants in its processes to do likewise.

As part of its public awareness program for the review of the Kiggavik project proposal, the NIRB will be hosting a community information session in Baker Lake on Monday, March 21 in an attempt to provide accessible informational materials related to uranium mining and uranium issues for use by members of the general public. Simultaneous Inuktitut interpretation will be provided for this session along with translated copies of presentation materials, and I would like to encourage the members of the Baker Lake HTO to consider attending and encouraging other interested community members to attend.

In closing, the NIRB appreciates the concerns raised by the HTO regarding the need for NIRB documents to be made available in Inuktitut, and the Board is working to address these concerns to the extent possible, given the constraints noted above. If you have any additional questions or concerns regarding this matter, please feel free to contact me directly at the number below.

If you require clarification on other issues associated with the NIRB’s review of the Kiggavik project, please contact Sophia Granchinho, Technical Advisor, at (867) 793-4633 or sgranchinho@nirb.ca.

² The NIRB previously responded to a similar request by Nunavummiut Makitagunarningit in correspondence dated November 23, 2011.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan Barry". The signature is written in a cursive style and ends with a long horizontal flourish.

Ryan Barry
Director, Technical Services
Nunavut Impact Review Board
(867) 983-4608
rbarry@nirb.ca

cc: Rhoda Cunningham, GN-CLEY
Mary Ellen Thomas, NRI
Kiggavik Distribution List

Enclosed: Baker Lake HTO Letter to NIRB Re Revised Draft EIS Guidelines (February 28, 2011)