

Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway (ITH) Review Technical Sessions

Issues Identified for Discussion

Submitted by: Wildlife Management Advisory Council (Northwest Territories) (WMAC)

Submitted to: Environmental Impact Review Board (EIRB)

For: Technical Sessions, Inuvik, August 22 and 23, 2012

Preamble: Note that the issues listed below have been previously highlighted in WMAC's technical review of the EIS 'A Review of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Construction of the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway, NWT' posted on the EIRB website - none of these issues have been addressed to date.

Cumulative Effects - Biophysical

Issue: The cumulative effects assessment (CEA) presented within the Developer's EIS is scientifically weak and insufficient, and therefore likely erroneous in its conclusion of no net impact. The consequences of this likely affect other principal findings of the EIS including the long-term effects of the ITH on VECs, wildlife and wildlife habitat, harvesting, mitigation and remediation measures, the worst-case scenario, and post-construction monitoring.

- Resolution: Conduct a more scientifically rigorous CEA, and incorporate its outputs into other related elements of the EIS including wildlife and wildlife habitat, harvesting, mitigation and remediation measures, worst-case scenario, and post-construction monitoring.

Biophysical - Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

Issue: The long-term, cumulative effects of the ITH on wildlife and wildlife habitat, especially important VECs such as caribou, grizzly bear, and the Husky Lakes remain unknown because of the inadequate temporal and spatial boundaries assigned to the CEA within the Developer's EIS.

- Resolution: Conduct a more scientifically rigorous CEA.

Issue: The long-term, cumulative effects of the ITH on wildlife and wildlife habitat, especially important VECs such as caribou, grizzly bear, and the Husky Lakes remain unknown because of the omission of existing and proposed human developments within the CEA of the Developer's EIS.

- Resolution: Conduct a more scientifically rigorous CEA.

Issue: The long-term, cumulative effects of the ITH on wildlife and wildlife habitat, especially important VECs such as caribou, grizzly bear, and the Husky Lakes remain unknown because of the omission of indirect effects on these species within the CEA of the Developer's EIS.

- Resolution: Conduct a more scientifically rigorous CEA.

Biophysical - Granular Resources

Issue: The information provided by the Developer to date on potential borrow pit sites is insufficient in that it does not specify the exact locations of the sites and associated roads that will be developed and built nor the extent to which these sites and roads will be developed and built in both time and space.

- Resolution: The Developer needs to provide the information and incorporate it within a more scientifically rigorous CEA.

Issue: The cumulative ecological effects predicted from the development of borrow pits and their associated infrastructure (roads, etc.) on caribou and grizzly bear populations and habitat (especially eskers – important denning habitat) up to 50 years following road construction is unknown.

- Resolution: Conduct a CEA that is both more realistic and scientifically anchored to the actual spatial requirements of both VEC species in the ISR, rather than the narrowly defined cumulative effects study area in the Developer's EIS.

Issue: In addition to the borrow pits and their associated infrastructure, the cumulative effects of other existing and proposed developments have been excluded from the Developer's EIS, especially the Mackenzie Gas Project, the Parsons Lake Gas Field development and the expansion (expected to occur over the next three to five years) of infrastructure for the supply of natural gas to the town of Inuvik.

- Resolution: Include all existing and proposed human developments within a more scientifically rigorous CEA.

Human Environment - Harvesting

Issue: Due to the scientifically weak CEA within the Developer's EIS, it is not possible to predict what the effects of the ITH and other existing and proposed developments will have on the long-term harvest of caribou and grizzly bear, both species of immense importance to the Inuvialuit.

- Resolution: Conduct a more scientifically rigorous CEA and incorporate the outputs into caribou and grizzly bear harvest predictions.

Worst Case Scenario

Issue: Due to the scientifically weak CEA within the Developer's EIS, it is not possible to assess whether or not the worst case scenario outlined is realistic, especially for caribou and grizzly bear, species of immense importance to the Inuvialuit.

- Resolution: Conduct a more scientifically rigorous CEA, and if appropriate, incorporate its outputs into a revised worst-case scenario.

Mitigation and Remediation - Biophysical

Issue: Due to the scientifically weak CEA within the Developer's EIS, it is not possible to assess whether or not the mitigation and/or remediation measures proposed for the ITH are sufficient, especially for caribou and grizzly bear populations and habitat, species of immense importance to the Inuvialuit.

- Resolution: Conduct a more scientifically rigorous CEA, and incorporate its outputs into mitigation and remediation measures.

Mitigation and Remediation – Harvest

Issue: Due to the scientifically weak CEA within the Developer's EIS, it is not possible to assess whether or not the mitigation and/or remediation measures proposed for the ITH are sufficient, especially for the harvest of caribou and grizzly bear, species of immense importance to the Inuvialuit.

- Resolution: Conduct a more scientifically rigorous CEA, and incorporate its outputs into harvest mitigation and remediation measures.

Follow-up and Monitoring - Biophysical

Issue: The post-construction monitoring scheme proposed for the ITH in the Developer's EIS is totally insufficient and will be unable to track project-caused changes in VEC abundance and distribution, especially caribou and grizzly bear, species of immense importance to the Inuvialuit.

- Resolution: Design and implement an integrated, cumulative effects monitoring plan specific to the project within the context of existing and proposed human developments within the ISR.