

August 3, 2007

Sarah Baines
Regulatory Officer
Wek'eezhii Land and Water Board
#1, 4905 – 48th St.
Yellowknife, NT X1A 3S3

Dear Ms. Baines

BHP BILLITON DIAMONDS INC.

Re: Aquatic Effects Monitoring Program – August-only Lake Sampling

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) has reviewed the above plan and would like to provide the following comments based on mandated responsibilities under the *Environmental Protection Act (EPA)*.

Project Components

ENR understands the proposed action to consist of triplicate lake sampling in August only of each year (instead of obtaining single samples in July, August, and September). ENR understands that the rationale for this change is:

- To increase the consistency and usefulness of the open-water data by aligning more intensive lake water quality sampling with August biological sampling, and
- To minimize the risk introduced by natural variability in water quality measures (i.e. time of freshet and September rains).

ENR also understands that the following precautions will be taken in applying August-only lake sampling at Ekati:

- Routine sampling under the Surveillance Network Program (SNP) will continue to monitor water flowing into and out of the receiving lakes through July, August, and September.
- That a detailed evaluation of the increases in reliability from August-only lake sampling and the new statistical procedures (triplicate versus duplicate or singular sampling) will be undertaken in the future as new data is collected and analyzed under the new protocols.

Given the above the rationale, and precautions to be taken by BHP Billiton in applying August-only lake sampling at Ekati, ENR has no comments or recommendations to provide to the Board.

Should you have any questions regarding the above, please contact Jason McNeill, Environmental Assessment Officer at 920-8071.

Sincerely



Jason McNeill
Regulatory Coordinator
Environmental Assessment and Monitoring
Environment and Natural Resources

- C. Erika Nyysönen
Industrial Technologist - Mining
Environmental Protection