



Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency

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Claudine Lee, M.Sc., P.Geol.
Superintendent - Environment Operations
Environment and Communities
Dominion Diamond Ekati Corporation
1102 4920 52nd Street
Yellowknife NT X1A 3T1

Re: Letter of support for Towards Sustainable Mining Environment Excellence Awards - Grizzly Bear DNA Program.

We are providing this letter as support for the Ekati Diamond Mine submission to the Towards Sustainable Mining Environment Excellence Awards for work on the Lac de Gras grizzly bear DNA program. Interactions between barren-ground grizzly bears and resource developments in tundra situations have long been a concern for communities and regulators alike. Given their large movements and home range sizes, potential effects on bears are best monitored and managed at a scale that is larger than individual developments.

The Agency is pleased to note that Dominion Diamond Ekati Corp. (and the Mine's previous owner, BHP Billiton) has shown leadership in developing, funding, and conducting one of the largest studies of its kind to examine grizzly bear abundance and distribution over a large area of the Central Arctic. DDEC was involved with extensive technical discussions and community consultations leading up to the study, and conducted the field work in collaboration with the adjacent Diavik diamond mine over a two-year period. The project was a good example of bringing scientists and community members together to collaborate on this important work.

DNA studies are relatively cutting edge, and involve non-invasive sampling of hair to identify individuals and estimate abundance and distribution. These studies provide more accurate data with less stress to wildlife than conventional studies. DNA studies can also be rolled into more effective and efficient long-term monitoring. DNA studies conducted by industry on grizzly bears and wolverines have only been common practice in the North since about 2005, but are now established as the industry standard. The Agency believes that a large part of this acceptance is due to the leadership that DDEC has shown in conducting its study.

The results of this two-year project have enabled DDEC to define baseline grizzly bear population levels that can be used to determine if the mine or mine-related activities influence the relative abundance and distribution of grizzly bears over time. These data also feed into valuable regional grizzly bear population monitoring. The research was developed in a collaborative manner, and was conducted to high scientific standards with direct involvement of local communities and Traditional Knowledge. The results should soon enable DDEC to determine baseline population data to determine if the mine or mine-related activities influence the relative abundance and distribution of grizzly bears over time.

Please contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Ross". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and a long, sweeping tail.

Bill Ross
Chairperson