

***Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency  
Conference Call of the Board of Directors  
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories  
December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003  
Summary of Discussion***

Updated: February 3, 2004

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Directors

Red Pedersen	Tim Byers
Bill Ross	Tony Pearse
François Messier	Dave Osmond

Staff

Carole Mills	Sean Kollee
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The conference call was called to order by the chairperson at 2:15 pm on Monday December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003. The agenda items were reviewed and accepted:

***Agenda***

1. Next steps to deal with cancellation of BHPB's environmental workshops.
2. Regional monitoring Agency Aboriginal caucus workshop.

**1. Next steps to deal with cancellation of BHPB's environmental workshops**

The Chairperson had no further comments regarding his conversation with Ian Goodwin (BHPB) than that already delivered to staff and Directors. He had relayed to BHPB that the Board felt the workshop cancellations were their biggest disappointments since the Agency's inception. Bill requested BHPB re-institute the February community workshop but BHPB had determined it could achieve its consultative requirements through separate community visits.

Carole mentioned that the Dogrib and potentially the KIA would be sending letters to BHPB on this issue supporting the Agency position. The Directors felt support from Agency Aboriginal members to be critical on this issue. Further, government support would be beneficial. Lutsel K'e may also be supportive but the Yellowknives Dene less so because the elders were said to be losing interest in attending anyway due to the nature of the workshops. The elders are more interested in the results rather than the technical nature of the methods. The Yellowknives Dene may increasingly rely on the government and the Agency to ensure proper technical review. Separate community visits may reduce the effectiveness of BHPB's consultative process because the right individuals may not be in attendance. Many other conflicting priorities and developments are reducing the capacity of the Yellowknives Dene at this time. The Directors agreed that IACT would be the proper venue for discussion of this topic with the regulators at the December 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The Directors discussed the potential for the Agency to facilitate and organize public environmental workshops. It was agreed that:

- The Agency hosting the workshop would be a major contribution to increasing the capacity of our Aboriginal members to understand the environmental consequences of the BHPB project
- IACT must be surveyed for support and for the interest of the regulators to attend the workshop prior to proceeding with it
- BHPB would be invited to the workshop and be entitled to speak and clarify comments but not take over the floor and coordinate the presentations
- Directors would be required to review key BHPB documents and deliver presentations at the workshop
- The timeline of the workshop should be such that the outcome of the event can contribute to BHPB's 2004 field studies. March 2004 would be the latest month to host the event
- IEMA can cover its own costs. Aboriginal member representative costs would likely be funded through the current budget
- BHPB's role is critical in responding to proposed changes (and proposing changes) and it must be involved.
- The staff should estimate the total cost of the workshop including equipment rental
- A meeting of the board in January would be beneficial to discuss the content of the BHPB environmental reports and the Agency interpretation of the reports
- The Agency needs BHPB's reports and recommended changes for the next year to be delivered in a timely manner in order for us to be able to plan the workshop presentations
- There may need to be some involvement of BHPB contractors in supplying the materials necessary to develop good Powerpoint presentations
- BHPB should attend or this workshop would not be considered relevant by regulators or communities

Directors instructed staff to compose a letter to BHPB and Society members outlining the Agency's intent to host an environmental workshop in late winter. The letter should contain content such as:

- Our belief that the workshop are of substantive enough importance to environmental management of Ekati that we are willing to host the workshop
- A request for BHPB's participation because it possesses the ability to respond to proposed changes of environmental management plans
- An expression of our unhappiness with BHPB's decision and the need for collaborative discussions with all parties

Directors considered issuing a press release related to the workshop cancellations. It was agreed to delay this action depending in part on BHPB's reaction to the letter advising BHPB of the Agency led workshop until after the Christmas holiday. The press release would have a positive focus and would inform the public of the Agency's continued role in monitoring Ekati.

## **2. Regional monitoring Agency (RMA) aboriginal caucus workshop.**

Carole expressed her initial hesitation towards the Agency hosting a RMA Aboriginal caucus workshop in case an aboriginal party had wanted to host it. After Dogrib, KIA and Yellowknives Dene representatives expressed support for the Agency hosting the workshop she became more comfortable. She noted that DIAND has suggested a budget for this initiative. This budget does not include any Director or staff time to plan and attend the workshop. She noted that a substantial component of the workshop cost would be preparing the background material and the final report that is fundamental to a successful outcome.

Carole outlined potential Agency and non-Aboriginal participation in the workshop as well as ideas for workshop itself:

- Presentations from DIAND, EMAB and IEMA would be followed by the caucus working together
- Not all directors would likely be able to attend
- Aboriginal members are aware of the importance of having an actual deliverable and a commitment of behalf of leadership following the workshop
- The KIA plans to have its own meeting to discuss RMA options
- A proposal has been drafted by staff and is ready to distribute to Directors
- The deliverable is the report and recommendations from the workshop

The Directors agreed with the substance of Carole's update and mentioned they expect an opportunity to provide a detailed presentation on the history and successes of the Agency and to suggest steps for the Aboriginal caucus to move forward. The week before the De Beers Snap Lake hearing may be a good time for a two-day RMA aboriginal caucus workshop (January 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>).

**Approval: Carole has the authority to administer, on behalf of the Agency, the contractual arrangements associated with delivering the workshop, including approval of expenditures over \$1,000.**

Summary Approved by:

-ORIGINAL SIGNED BY-

François Messier, Treasurer