



Yellowknives Dene First Nation

P.O. Box 2514, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P8

August 23rd, 2010

Lynn Carter
Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board
4910 50th Avenue
Yellowknife, NT
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Dear Ms. Carter:

Re: City Water License Amendment – MV2008L3-007

The Yellowknives Dene First Nation requests that the board rejects this amendment.. This amendment requests that the Board simply ‘move the goalposts’ from an Effluent Quality Criteria (EQC) already in excess of the freshwater CCME guidelines to a threshold exceeding the CCME by an astounding 68 times. This is not what the YKDFN would call protective of the environment, quite the opposite.

Developments are expected to minimize the amount of waste entering waters wherever technically and environmentally possible. This proposed amendment does not provide any real background (what is there is general and of limited value), nor does it submit any kind of alternatives consideration as to why altering the EQCs is the optimal solution. We know that Arsenic contamination can be dealt with in a technical sense – consider the much more stringent EQCs attached to other developments in more remote locations, notably Tundra Mine Remediation. If treatment is possible in that situation, it is not clear why this development requires an exemption, and until such time that a real rationale is provided, this EQCs attached to this development should be held to a protective standard.

The ultimate receiving point for this discharge will be Great Slave Lake and the YKDFN remind the Board of the long history of arsenic discharge to Yellowknife Bay and the severe environmental impact that this has had both on the people and a once bountiful and critical fishery. Only now, 10 years after the shutdown of the mine and 40 years after meaningful environmental controls, have YKDFN seen Lake Trout and Inconnu begin to return to *Weledeh* (Yellowknife River). Secondly, as the City is in the planning process of returning their water intake to Great Slave Lake, YKDFN reject the assertion on the bottom of page 3 that the most appropriate pathway for an analog to this discharge. For generations, the people of the Yellowknives drew water from Great Slave Lake – until the mid-1970’s when the contamination from the Mines had made the water unsafe. As a result, this most precious of resources has now been commoditized – people are now forced to pay to receive a basic human right which they

had accessed for thousands of years. As the lake quality finally begins to recover after 50 years of degradation, there should be careful consideration before reintroducing further contamination into the system.

The *Draft Water and Effluent Quality Management Policy* notes some of the items that should be considered when setting site-specific water quality standards. Though just a draft, it is useful in this context. All five points from this section (7.2.1.2) are captured already in this letter. We hope that the Board considers this when evaluating this amendment request. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Land and Environment Office at 766-3496.

Sincerely,



Chief Edward Sangris
Yellowknives Dene First Nation (Dettah)

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