



September 27, 2021

Grand Chief George Mackenzie
Tłı̨chǫ Government
PO BOX 412
BEHCHOKǫ NT X0E 0Y0

REGISTERED MAIL

Dear Grand Chief Mackenzie:

Response to Information Request #47

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is writing the Tłı̨chǫ Government (TG) to respond directly to information requested during the Ekati Technical Workshop for the Point Lake Project Type A Water Licence Amendment and Type A Land Use Permits Application. Information Request #47, as issued to the GNWT by the Wek'eezhii Land and Water Board read:

IR #47 for GNWT and Arctic: A. What support is GNWT/Arctic planning to provide to Tłı̨chǫ workers to retrain for the possible scenario of the mine closing? B. What support is in place for the transition of the Tłı̨chǫ workforce from the mine into their communities? How are their skills made to be transferable to the non-mining sector? C. What will GNWT/Arctic do to maintain high Tłı̨chǫ worker numbers and northern employment? D. How can the TG work with the GNWT and Arctic to ensure more apprentices are trained and hired in the Tlı̨cho region? E. What are the anticipated numbers of employment at the mine site, from now until closure? What skills are required for these positions? How will ongoing capacity building and skill development be supported for Tłı̨chǫ workers? F. How are GNWT/Arctic planning to support communities in the Tłı̨chǫ region who are experiencing increasing unemployment?

Your concerns about Tłı̨chǫ workers are shared by the GNWT, and steps are being taken to ensure that Tłı̨chǫ workers benefit from the Point Lake Project and are prepared for after Ekati closes.

Socio-Economic Agreements (SEAs) are the main tool that the GNWT uses to ensure the flow of benefits to Northwest Territories (NWT) Indigenous peoples, residents, and businesses. SEAs are contracts between the GNWT and mines that set out commitments that the mine, in this case Ekati, has made for employment, training, and procurement (among other commitments). For example, the Ekati SEA requires that 62 percent of total employment come from northern residents.

.../2

Due to the recent change in ownership at Ekati Mine, the new owners, Arctic Canadian Diamond Company (Arctic), are now familiarizing themselves with the SEA. To support the fulfillment of SEA commitments, the GNWT and Arctic have been collaborating on a socio-economic plan that will set out how Arctic will implement the SEA and ensure the promised benefits flow to northern residents. Once complete, this plan will address your questions related to work at the mine, addressing how to maintain a high level of northern employment, apprentice training, identifying the skills required for positions, developing skills required for entry-level positions and advancement, and build the capacity of NWT businesses to participate in the mine's contracts.

The department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) is currently conducting a review of the SEA program, analyzing SEAs on the questions of effectiveness, relevance, administration, and sustainability. The review will explore how training commitments can be made to be more sustainable, prepared for mine closure, and transferable to non-mining activities. This project is currently in the evaluation phase, which will be followed by redesign activities in 2022. The TG has been participating in this review and will have input throughout the evaluation and redesign.

There is also a project being led by Diavik Diamond Mines and De Beers called "Re-imagining Closure" that is seeking to stimulate creative discussion of options for mine assets and associated socioeconomic opportunities after mine closure. GNWT is participating in this work and understand that a variety of organizations, including Indigenous Governments and Indigenous Organizations, will be engaged throughout the fall leading up to a co-design workshop towards the end of the year.

We hope that this addresses your questions, and that the GNWT and TG can continue to collaborate on improving socio-economic outcomes for Tẖcẖ residents of the NWT. If you have any questions or concerns about SEAs, please contact Ms. Dianna Beck, Manager of Socio-economics, at Dianna.Beck@gov.nt.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Wawzonek', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Caroline Wawzonek
Minister
Industry, Tourism and Investment

c. Distribution List

Distribution List

The Honourable Caroline Cochrane
Premier

Ms. Shaleen Woodward
Principal Secretary

Mr. Martin Goldney
Secretary to Cabinet/Deputy Minister
Executive and Indigenous Affairs

Ms. Shawn McCann
Deputy Secretary, Indigenous and Intergovernmental Affairs
Executive and Indigenous Affairs

Mr. John MacDonald
Deputy Minister
Education, Culture and Employment

Ms. Laura Duncan
Tłıchq Executive Officer
Tłıchq Government

Mr. Ryan Fequet
Executive Director
Wek'eezhii Land and Water Board

Ms. Lorraine Seale
Director of Securities and Project Assessment
Department of Lands