



Votre référence - Your file

June 17, 2015

Notre référence - Our file

Ms. Heather Bourassa
Chair
Sahtu Land Use Planning Board
PO Box 235
Fort Good Hope NT X0E0H0

Dear Ms. Bourassa:

Thank-you for sending Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development a copy of the Board's background report regarding the amendment of the Sahtu Land Use Plan following the creation of the Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve. The amendment of the Plan to rezone those areas excluded from the final park boundary is an important planning initiative and will provide further clarity on land use in the Sahtu Settlement Area.

I appreciate the Board's work in summarizing the process leading to the current requirement for an amendment of the Sahtu Land Use Plan. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight Prime Minister Stephen Harper's announcement in Norman Wells on August 22, 2012 regarding the establishment of the Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve. During the announcement, the Prime Minister noted that "opportunities for resource development were carefully considered when setting the park's boundaries". These considerations were based on the results of the Mineral and Energy Resource Assessment conducted to determine resource potential in the area. As such, it is the Government of Canada's expectation that any amendment to the Sahtu Land Use Plan will permit resource development opportunities in those areas excluded from the Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve.

This position was also communicated in the Government of Canada Review of the 2013 Draft Sahtu Land Use Plan submitted to the Board on April 15, 2013. The submission reads:

Any portion of the PCI not included in the park or protected area boundary must also be rezoned and that zoning should reflect the information collected and decisions made during the park or protected area boundary determination and establishment process. For example, during boundary determination, information

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from a Mineral and Energy Resource Assessment (MERA) is used to exclude areas of high economic potential. For consistency, areas excluded from final park or protected area boundaries due to their development potential should be zoned to allow for responsible resource development.

Unfortunately, our office will not be able to attend the July public meetings in Tulita or Norman Wells, but we hope to have representation at the Yellowknife session. We look forward to continued communication with the Board and the submission of an amendment to the Sahtu Land Use Plan for approval.

Sincerely,



Catherine Conrad
Senior Director, Environment and Renewable Resources
Northern Affairs Organization
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada