



Impact Assessment  
Agency of Canada

Ontario Region  
600-55 York Street  
Toronto ON M5J 1R7

Agence d'évaluation  
d'impact du Canada

Région de l'Ontario  
600-55 rue York  
Toronto ON M5J 1R7

June 15, 2020

Sent by email

Chief Chris Moonias  
Neskantaga First Nation  
P.O Box 105  
Lansdowne House ON P0T 1Z0  
chris.moonias@neskantaga.com

Dear Chief Chris Moonias:

**Subject: Additional information about the potential impacts of the Webequie Supply Road Project on Neskantaga First Nation**

Thank you for your submissions, dated February 25, 2020 and March 16, 2020 in response to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada's (the Agency) Notice of Commencement letter for the Marten Falls Community Access Road Project. The Agency appreciates the detailed overview of Neskantaga First Nation's use and occupancy of the Ring of Fire area, including information on historical hunting, trapping, and fishing activities and primary trade routes. The Agency recognizes the rights of Neskantaga First Nation that are recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and notes your submission's conclusion that Neskantaga First Nation members continue to exercise hunting, trapping, and fishing activities in the project area into the present day.

The Agency has updated "Attachment 4" from the February 24, 2020, letter to expand upon potential archaeological and cultural heritage impacts beyond the Muketei River, reflecting your concerns in relation to eskers and gravel ridges along the project route as critical sources of gravel for the construction of the Project.

In your submission, Neskantaga First Nation references anecdotal reports of burial sites and toponyms in, and around, the project area. While the Agency will continue to consult with your community throughout the impact assessment to further refine our understanding of the Project's potential impacts on your rights, Neskantaga First Nation is encouraged to share approximate location, access, and experience information of these sites with the proponent, Marten Falls First Nation, to support and refine the impact assessment process and inform the development of the proponent's Impact Statement.

**Question Related to the Northern Road Link**

The Agency is aware of the announcement made by the Province of Ontario, Marten Falls First Nation and Webequie First Nation regarding the Northern Road Link. On May 19, 2020, the Agency notified Marten Falls First Nation and Webequie First Nation that the project appears to be designated under the *Impact Assessment Act* and requested an Initial Project Description. At this time, the Agency has not received an Initial Project Description for the Northern Road Link.

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Upon the proponent's submission of an Initial Project Description that complies with the *Information and Management of Time Limits Regulations*, the Agency will notify Indigenous groups who may be impacted by the Project of a formal comment period and seek their views on the Initial Project Description and whether an impact assessment should be required for the project.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The Agency recognizes that the Government of Canada has advised all Canadians to implement social distancing measures, including avoiding close contact with others, to minimize COVID-19 transmission in communities. In consideration that social distancing measures often need extensive preparation and currently take priority, the Agency highlights its current measures and commitments to support your community's COVID 19 response at this time:

- The Agency is currently following [guidelines](#) that have been issued by the Public Health Agency of Canada and local health authorities;
- The Agency has halted in-person and in-community meetings; when a meeting is unavoidable during the current circumstance, we will conduct those activities through digital communications including: teleconference calls and WebEx as appropriate and to the preference of Indigenous groups to discuss projects;
- The Agency remains flexible and able to adapt our conduct as necessary to prioritize the health and safety of communities participating in impact assessments;
- The Agency continues to be in touch with proponents to understand how projects are affected by COVID-19;
- The Agency will provide updates to Indigenous groups about the status of projects at regular intervals.

Thank you for your continued participation in the impact assessment for the Project. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact me at 416-476 5476 or at IAAC.Webequie.AEIC@canada.ca. I welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with your community.

Sincerely,

<Original signed by>

Caitlin Cafaro  
Crown Consultation Coordinator

Enclosure: Summary of information available to the Crown with respect to the potential adverse impacts of the Webequie Supply Road Project on Neskantaga First Nation

c.c.: Wayne Moonias, Road Coordinator, Neskantaga First Nation  
Leroy Moonias, Executive Secretary, Neskantaga First Nation  
David Peerla, Advisor, Lakehead University