



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

October 13, 2020

Sent by email

Chief Chris Moonias
Neskantaga First Nation
P.O Box 105
Lansdowne House ON P0T 1Z0
<Email address removed>

Dear Chief Chris Moonias:

Subject: Response to Questions regarding development in the Ring of Fire Area

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada has received an email from David Peerla on behalf of Neskantaga First Nation dated August 28, 2020. The email requested information from the Agency related to recent announcements and other developments in the Ring of Fire area. The objective of this letter is to respond to your questions to the greatest extent possible. Responses to questions raised by David Peerla and Wayne Moonias on October 6, 2020, during a telephone call, will follow in a separate letter.

Concerns Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Agency acknowledges Neskantaga First Nation's concern regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on the consultation processes and the ability of Neskantaga First Nation to participate meaningfully in the impact assessment process. The Agency provided details in our June 15, 2020 correspondence, outlining how the Agency has adjusted its conduct for COVID-19.

The Agency is committed to substantive, meaningful, and respectful consultation throughout the impact assessment process and will work together with Indigenous groups to identify opportunities to support participation in the context of the ongoing pandemic.

Provincial Coordination

At this time, the Agency does not anticipate changes to the coordination of the federal impact assessment and provincial environmental assessment activities in light of comment periods for the provincial Terms of Reference for both the Webequie Supply Road or Marten Falls Community Access Road projects.

The Agency will continue to coordinate consultation on the projects with provincial officials to the extent possible, as outlined in the Cooperation Plans¹. If this approach should change, the Agency will notify the Indigenous groups identified in the Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plans².

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¹ [Marten Falls Community Access Road Cooperation Plan](#)
[Webequie Supply Road Project Cooperation Plan](#)

² [Marten Falls Community Access Road Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan](#)
[Webequie Supply Road Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan](#)



For matters related to the provincial environmental assessments, I encourage you to contact Sasha McLeod, Special Project Officer with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, at sasha.mcleod@ontario.ca.

Eagle's Nest Project

On August 9, 2019, the Agency notified Neskantaga First Nation that the federal environmental assessment process for the Eagle's Nest Project would be terminated. On August 28, 2019, the *Impact Assessment Act* (IAA) came into force, replacing the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*. As a result, the comprehensive study for the Eagle's Nest Project, which was being conducted under the former *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, was terminated per the transitional provisions of the *Impact Assessment Act*. The Eagle's Nest Project, as proposed by Noront Resources Ltd, is not a designated physical activity as described in the *Physical Activities Regulations* (the Regulations) of IAA. A copy of the Regulations is available here: <https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2019-285/index.html>. Additionally, the termination of the federal environmental assessment process does not preclude any other federal legislative, regulatory and constitutional requirements that may be applicable to the Eagle's Nest Project.

The Agency's Ontario Region Office has no information regarding statements from Noront Resources Ltd. about the meeting with the Minister of Natural Resources, the Honorable Seamus O'Regan.

Regional Assessment in the Ring of Fire Area

Questions concerning the Regional Assessment in the Ring of Fire area (Regional Assessment) have been forwarded to the Agency's Regional Assessment Team, who can be contacted directly at iaac.regionalrof-cdfregionale.aeic@canada.ca.

Status of the Northern Road Link

As per our correspondence to Neskantaga First Nation on June 15, 2020, the Agency has not been provided with an Initial Project Description by Marten Falls First Nation and Webequie First Nation. Upon the 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 Northern Road Link of a formal comment period to seek their views on the Initial Project Description and whether an impact assessment should be required for the Northern Road Link.

Funding Opportunities

As per the Agency's correspondence to Neskantaga First Nation on September 16, 2020, the Agency will directly notify your community of participant funding availability and the call for participant funding applications later this fall. For further information on participant funding and contribution agreements during the impact assessment process please visit the following link: <https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/services/public-participation/participant-funding-application-environmental-assessment>.

If you have questions or concerns regarding the funding application process, please contact Nathalie Boivin, Senior Funding Officer, at 613-864-2902 or Nathalie.Boivin@canada.ca.

Consultation Fatigue

The Agency recognizes that it can be challenging to participate in consultation and engagement activities for multiple processes that are subject to similar timeframes. The Agency teams working on the Regional Assessment and the assessments for the Marten Falls Community Access Road Project and Webequie Supply Road Project continue to focus on creating efficiencies to address consultation fatigue, such as coordinating activities and sharing the input received from Indigenous groups, where possible.

As you share information with the Agency regarding the Regional Assessment and/or the impact assessments for the road projects, please feel free to identify any information or knowledge that can be considered across multiple assessment processes.

Important Note

Any information submitted to the Agency to inform the road project assessments will be made publicly available as part of the project file. Information for the road project assessments or the Regional Assessment may be posted online via the Registry Internet site, subject to certain exceptions related to privacy, security or confidentiality. The Agency's Submission Policy (<https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/participation/conditions>) determines which submitted information can be shared publicly, and what should remain private. For further information on how we protect your privacy, please refer to the Privacy Notice (<https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/protection?culture=en-CA>). If you do not want your information posted on the Registry, please contact us at IAAC.MartenFalls.AEIC@canada.ca, IAAC.Webequie.AEIC@canada.ca or IAAC.RegionalROF-CDFRegionale.AEIC@canada.ca prior to submitting your information.

Request for Teleconference

Thank you for your request to meet by phone. The Agency would be pleased to set up a date and time with Neskantaga First Nation, once the back to school activities have settled. Please feel free to contact me to arrange a meeting at 647-391-8426 or at IAAC.MartenFalls.AEIC@canada.ca or IAAC.Webequie.AEIC@canada.ca. The Agency welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with your community.

Sincerely,

<Original signed by>

Laura DeCoste
Crown Consultation Coordinator

c.c.: Wayne Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation
Leroy Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation
David Peerla, Lakehead University