

Enclosure 1: Summary of Information on Potential for Impacts on Weenusk First Nation from the Northern Road Link Project

This **draft** document was prepared by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) to set out the Agency's preliminary understanding of the **potential** for impacts on Weenusk First Nation, due to the Northern Road Link Project (the Project). The Agency is seeking to learn about direct impacts the Project could have on the exercise of Weenusk First Nation's Aboriginal and Treaty rights. There are prompting questions in this document, which the Agency hopes could guide your input to the Agency. The Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines for the Project will identify the valued components that the Proponent will be required to study during the preparation of its Impact Statement.

As additional information about impacts of the Project that are specific to Weenusk First Nation are shared with the Agency throughout the impact assessment process, this document will be updated, and will inform the Proponent's studies and the impact assessment.

The Proposed Project

Marten Falls First Nation and Webequie First Nation (the Proponent) is proposing the construction and operation, including maintenance, of an all-season multi-use public highway approximately 117 km to 164 km in length. The highway would connect the proposed Webequie Supply Road to the proposed Marten Falls Community Access Road. The highway would become part of a future all-season road network connecting mineral development activities in the Ring of Fire area to the provincial highway network system at or near Nakina, Ontario.

Summary of Information Available to the Agency about:

- a) the nature and extent of Weenusk First Nation's Aboriginal and treaty rights;**
 - b) potential for impacts from the Project on the exercise of Weenusk First Nation's Aboriginal and treaty rights; and**
 - c) potential changes to health, social, or economic conditions of Weenusk First Nation due to the Project.**
- a) Summary of the information available to the Agency related to the nature and extent of Weenusk First Nation's Aboriginal and treaty rights:
- Members of Weenusk First Nation have Aboriginal and treaty rights that are recognized and affirmed under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.
 - Weenusk First Nation is a signatory to Treaty 9, which provides rights to hunting, trapping and fishing throughout the treaty area.
 - Weenusk First Nation's reserve (Winisk No. 90) is approximately 252 kilometres north of the Project.
 - Weenusk First Nation is not affiliated with a Tribal Council, but is a member of Chiefs of Ontario and Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

- b) Summary of the information available to the Agency on the potential for impacts to the exercise of Weenusk First Nation's rights, resulting from any change to the environment due to the Project:

Potential impacts to physical and cultural heritage

Seeking to Learn More

If there are any cultural sites of importance that could be impacted, the Agency requests that you kindly share as much detail about these sites, including their approximate locations, to assist the Agency with understanding the potential for impacts on Weenusk First Nation. These sites can be identified using buffers to protect Indigenous Knowledge.

If there are specific cultural practices near the Project that would be impacted, the Agency is interested to learn more. For example, if there are areas near the Project that are used to pass on teachings to youth or are used for ceremonies, the Agency would be able to understand more clearly the potential impacts to your community.

Potential impacts to the current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes

- Potential changes to access, experience or abundance of lands and resources used for fishing, hunting, trapping, and plant gathering.
 - For example, Weenusk First Nation stated that changes to water quality would impact the quality and quantity of fish that are caught in the area. Additionally, changes in migration patterns of birds was a concern for accessibility of birds for hunting purposes.

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If there are specific fishing, trapping or hunting sites used by Weenusk First Nation that potentially could be impacted by the Project (including by increased access), the Agency would like more information about the locations of these sites. For example, if there are fishing and hunting sites near or where the Project is proposed to be located, the Agency should be informed for assessing the impacts to the exercise of rights by Weenusk First Nation.

The Agency would like to know of any wildlife species important to Weenusk First Nation. In particular, which fish and bird species are of importance to Weenusk First Nation?

Potential impacts to any structure, site, or thing that is of historical, archeological, paleontological, or architectural significance

Seeking to Learn More

The Agency kindly requests that Weenusk First Nation shares any areas on a map that contain important historical structures or symbols, or potential archeological sites, of which the Proponent should be aware to minimize potential impacts. These areas can be identified using buffers to protect Indigenous Knowledge.

- c) Summary of the information available to the Agency on any potential changes to the health, social, or economic conditions of Weenusk First Nation due to the Project:

Potential changes to health, social or economic conditions

- The Agency understands from comments submitted by Weenusk First Nation that there could be a potential change to the accessibility of health care services, especially during project construction.

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If Weenusk First Nation is aware of potential changes to health, social, or economic conditions of your community, the Agency would be interested to learn more about these concerns. For example, the Agency is interested to learn about the potential change that Weenusk First Nation considers would occur in how the community would access health care services, particularly during project construction.

FOR ACTION: The Agency is seeking by **July 21, 2023**, your validation of the information set out above and any additional information about impacts the Project may have on Weenusk First Nation. Additional detail about the nature and extent of potential impacts to Weenusk First Nation or the exercise of rights by Weenusk First Nation may refine our understanding of the potential impacts of the Project, and allow the Agency to adjust its consultation approach, where necessary. Please provide your comments to the Agency by either using the **Submit a comment** button on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry Internet site¹ or sending an email to *NorthernRoad-RouteDuNord@iaac-aeic.gc.ca*.

In addition, the Agency would like to meet with your community to discuss the information set out above to understand better, how your community may be impacted by the Project.

The Agency encourages Weenusk First Nation to share information with the Proponent to inform the development of the Proponent’s Impact Statement.

¹ <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/84331>