



September 16, 2024

Chief Gary Lameman
Beaver Lake Cree Nation
BLCN Band Administration Office
Box 960
Lac La Biche AB T0A 2C0
consultation@blcn.ca

Chief Lameman:

Thank you for your letter of February 8, 2024, in which you request a regional assessment under the *Impact Assessment Act* (the IAA) of the Alberta portion of Beaver Lake Cree Nation's asserted traditional territory. The request specifically identifies the need to gain a greater understanding of the potential impacts, including cumulative effects, of current and future development on Beaver Lake Cree Nation's Aboriginal and treaty rights in the region with a focus on gathering data, and conducting a trend analysis of impacts on Indigenous physical and cultural heritage, traditional land use, culturally important sites, and Aboriginal and treaty rights.

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) undertook a detailed review of your request to inform my decision of whether to proceed with a regional assessment. Following careful consideration and analysis of your request, I have decided not to conduct a regional assessment in the Alberta portion of the Beaver Lake Cree Nation's asserted traditional territory at this time, for the reasons described below.

.../2

One of the key objectives of regional assessments under the IAA is to inform and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of future federal project-specific impact assessments. At this time, I am not aware of reasonably foreseeable future developments within the region in the next five to ten years that would be subject to impact assessment requirements under the IAA, which this regional assessment would help inform. Two federal review processes are underway for two projects in the region: the Marguerite Lake Compressed Air Energy Storage project, and the Suncor Base Mine Extension project. Given that the expected timeline for the completion of a regional assessment is three years, the results of the requested regional assessment would not likely be available to inform the conduct, or decision-making of either of the identified project impact assessments. Furthermore, as set out in the Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines for the Suncor Base Mine Extension Project, an assessment of the potential cumulative effects of the Project and other physical activities that have been or will be carried out in the regional study area will be required, including the impacts on the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

I would also like to acknowledge your concerns regarding the potential Pathways Alliance carbon capture and storage project. IAAC has, to date, not received information to indicate this proposal includes designated physical activities that would make it subject to the IAA. As the Proponent advances its project design, there may be other components that are part of a project that could be described in the Project List. The Proponent must assess its proposal to determine whether it is subject to the IAA and can contact IAAC to verify the Proponent's interpretation of the Project List.

I recognize the ecological and cultural significance of the region and acknowledge your concerns regarding the historical and contemporary impacts of development on Beaver Lake Cree Nation's Aboriginal and treaty rights, including cumulative effects, in the Alberta portion of your asserted traditional territory. There are existing regulatory frameworks, ongoing land-use planning and policy initiatives that are relevant to understanding and addressing the potential effects of current, and potential future development in this region. These include federally and provincially-funded existing and/or planned programs and initiatives that may address the concerns raised in your request, such as gathering data on the impacts, including cumulative effects, of past, current and future development within the region, the management of cumulative effects, and providing information on the impacts of development on Beaver Lake Cree Nation's Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Documentation related to this regional assessment request, including your request and this response, will be posted on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (Reference number 88773).

Thank you again for taking the time to prepare and submit this request for a regional assessment.

Sincerely,

<Original signed by>

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P. (il/lui/he/him)