

IGLOOLIK HUNTER'S AND TRAPPER'S ASSOCIATION COMMENTS FOR CANADIAN TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

1. Overall position

The Igloolik Hunter's and Trapper's Association has made its concerns known through the very limited consultations that have taken place so far. In a written submission during the December 9, 2024 half day consultation we wrote:

"The Hunters and Trappers Association's position is that permits for the Steensby port and rail should not be issued at this time. The Igloolik Hunters and Trappers Association has serious unresolved concerns with Baffinland's plans to build a port and railway at Steensby Inlet. The Crown's current approach to consulting Inuit about these permits is insufficient, because Inuit are owed deep consultation around how this component of the project will affect their ability to pursue their Indigenous rights. There should be a NIRB reconsideration of the terms and conditions of Baffinland's project certificate for the Mary River iron ore mine before any permits are issued."

In brief, we argued that "the assessment that review was based on is over a decade old and therefore seriously outdated. The HTA believes that a new assessment is required. Usually, under federal legislation, a mining company has 5 years to begin operations. After that, a reconsideration of the terms and conditions is required. These 'sunset clauses' exist because environmental conditions and knowledge change over time, sometimes necessitating reassessment. This same logic should be applied to Baffinland's plans to build a port and railway to Steensby Inlet."

We still hold these positions, and nothing we say here should be understood to contradict this view. We add to that a concern that the current consultations do not constitute the Aboriginal and Treaty Rights s 35 associated 'duty to consult' because of the size and importance of the area under consideration and its importance to our constitutionally protected harvesting practices.

We also note that the consultation processes we have engaged in are piece meal processes with different government departments only able to discuss very particular issues. This is difficult for us to manage; we work from what are called 'holistic' premises and do not separate caribou, land, waters, sea mammals, plants, fish, wolves and air pollutants. We do not see the components of this project as a stand-alone structure but intimately related to the mine itself on one end and to the ships that will travel on the other. Our Elders often notice slight differences in one area of the ecology leading to significant differences in other areas. It takes patient and careful work to gather such information, part of our Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. None of the current processes being used to consult with us come close to the degree of engagement required to access this traditional knowledge. Nor does your request for information around very specific questions. We are an understaffed and under-

resourced organization being asked to funnel our concerns through different processes to different departments with different deadlines. This is not the way meaningful consultation that actually is prepared to elicit and listen to our concerns should be implemented.

2. How would the location or operation of the proposed railway line affect your interests? Describe any expected benefits or concerns you have with the proposed line.

We do not see any benefits for our members from this project. On the contrary, its impacts on our members will clearly be bad and possibly catastrophic. If Steensby Inlet is destroyed and if the railroad drives away the caribou we have relied on our whole way of life will be endangered.

For your purposes we will add the following: if the rail route crosses water bodies at the narrowest areas of those bodies, it is likely ruining much used caribou crossing points. Our Elders made sure we did not camp at those places so as not to disturb the caribou entering the waters at those sites. Now many of them will be destroyed. To gather specific information around this we would need proper resources and time.

We are concerned about the wolf dens at the southern end of the proposed railway. Wolves are a species that play an important role in the overall ecology, and one of the narrow gaps the railway passes through would entail destroying a historic wolf trap or the dens; the decision seems to have been to destroy the dens. We need to find a better solution.

We are concerned about dust from the mine and from the rail cars (especially if they are not closed) covering a vast area of land. This will lead to impacts on land and water plants, on smaller land mammals, on fish, on nesting ducks and other birds and therefore on those of us who depend on these integral parts of our world.

We are concerned that there may be cultural sites and objects along or near the route that will be damaged, including grave sites, ancestral community camp sites, cairns, inuksuit and other cultural or practical structures. These represent our history and are precious to us.

We are concerned that not enough study has been done to examine possible kayak use on water bodies that may not be navigable to your eyes but may well have been to ours.

This list just scratches the surface of the many things that the proposed rail line might damage or destroy. It would require a sustained research effort on these and other issues for us to properly articulate our many concerns and then determine

whether mitigations are possible. We do not have the resources and your current schedule does not allow us the time to engage such an effort.

3. *If you have concerns about the proposed railway line, what could be done to address them?*

We believe that all approvals for licences should be withheld until proper hearings and research can be conducted. We have repeatedly insisted that we are not 'for' or 'against' the mine. We do find the current process rushed. Given the size and scope of this project we believe a much more careful process, attentive to possible impacts on our Inuit rights, including funds to support our participation, is required.

One small suggestion for change would be to improve adaptive management, which to this point exists in theory but does not seem to have any practical impact on the way the mine and ore shipments are managed. There must be a sanction on the company if and when it does not respect reasonable requests to adapt based on real and observable impacts. We also think a broader, Inuit controlled, system for the monitoring of impacts that feeds into such a process will be necessary. We are not confident that the company on its own is committed to either idea.

4. *Baffinland has provided information about the project in its application and supplemental documents (see Reference materials below). Is this information sufficient to understand how this construction and operations of the proposed railway line can affect you? If not, please describe what type of additional information you would need to know about the impact of the railway line on you.*

We believe the data and information gathered from fifteen years ago is not adequate. We cannot assess the impacts without resources and time. We do not believe that proper baseline data on caribou has been gathered, to take one critical example. We also think additional

We require additional Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit on all aspects of this project. The railway cannot be isolated from the port that will be constructed in conjunction with it and from the shipping that will be enabled by it. Just as the land and water ecologies are intimately tied together, so are the elements of this project.

At the current time we do not think we have been adequately consulted and that this project has been properly assessed. Please do not approve any licensing applications until such consultations and assessments can be meaningfully conducted.

5. *Additional Comments*

The Igloodik Hunter's and Trapper's Association has a number of other concerns which may or may not be relevant to Transport Canada but are clearly integral aspects of the overall project and which we must register with some government agency. We therefore do so here:

We understand that the water licence or any other licences that BIM applied for is going to be approximately fifteen (15) years in duration. The Board thinks that the duration should be shortened.

We are concerned about how full the ships will be when they first start shipping after the construction is completed. We think shipping loads and the volumes of shipping traffic alike should start off slowly and eventually increase over time and as the impacts of shipping are registered by harvesters and sea mammals alike.

We remain very concerned that marine mammals and land mammals will be disrupted by constant shipping and we are very confident that rail and shipping activity will decrease the number of animals on our hunting grounds.

Finally, we also think that our organisation, the Igloodik Hunter's and Trapper's Association, and all other affected HTA/HTO's, should be included during the study of ballast water or any other study conducted by Baffinland on any aspect of the mine expansion and the continuing operation of the mine.