



APR 29 2016

Votre référence - Your file

Notre référence - Our file

Mrs. Heather Bourassa
Chair
Sahtu Land Use Planning Board
PO BOX 235
FORT GOOD HOPE NT X0E 0H0

Dear Mrs. Bourassa:

Thank you for providing "Plan Approving Parties" the opportunity to review the proposed amendment to the Sahtu Land Use Plan in advance of it being submitted for final approval. I very much appreciate the Board's efforts to consult before formal amendments are proposed for approval, and I apologize for our delayed response. Amending the Plan, thereby excluding the Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve from plan applicability and rezoning lands excluded from the final park boundary, is an important planning initiative that will ensure clarity on land use in the Sahtu Settlement Area.

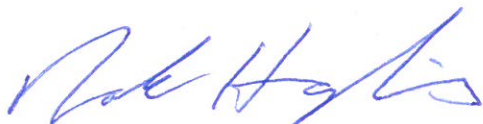
The Department recognizes the work of the Board in proposing a draft amendment that promotes a reasonable balance in the management of these lands, allowing for economic development in a significant proportion of areas subject to the amendment while protecting headwaters of the Nahanni and important wildlife habitat. The Department also recognizes the Government of the Northwest Territories' interests in their request for the Board to reconsider the proposed zoning. Given the divergent comments received on the draft amendment, we recognize additional work will be required in reaching consensus on an amendment that all parties are willing to approve and will continue to work with the Board and the planning partners as required.

Finalizing the amendment to the Sahtu Land Use Plan is an important step in maintaining regulatory certainty in the Sahtu Settlement Area. I look forward to reviewing the final amendment to the Sahtu Land Use Plan once the Sahtu Land Use Planning Board submits it for sequential approval by the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated, the territorial Minister of Lands, and the federal Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

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Should you have any questions concerning this submission, please contact Kim Pawley, Manager, Environmental Assessment, Land Use Planning and Conservation, at (819) 994-7110 or by email at Kim.Pawley@canada.ca.

Respectfully,



Mark Hopkins
Director General
Natural Resources and Environment Branch

Encl.

c.c.: Mr. Terry Hall
Mr. David Little

EDITORIAL COMMENTS ON THE AMENDMENT TO THE SAHTU LAND USE PLAN

1. Amendment 5 – Section 3.3 General Conformity Requirements, Map 3 *page 10, SLUP Amendment Application (DRAFT)*

For clarity, the use of transparency is recommended for displaying the “*Mountain Woodland Caribou – South Nahanni Herd Summer Habitat*” to ensure visibility of the underlying land use zones.

2. Amendment 13 – Appendix 1 Zone Descriptions *page 27-28, SLUP Amendment Application (DRAFT)*

A repeal description for Zone 41 is considered unnecessary in the final amended Sahtu Land Use Plan. Rather than providing a repeal description, the complete removal of the Proposed Conservation Zone “*Nááts’ihch’oh*” from the land use plan is the preferred approach. The subsequent renumbering of land use zones 42 and above would be required throughout the Plan. If the Board’s intent is to delay this exercise until the Plan 5-year revision exercise to minimize the extent of the current proposed amendment; this approach is also considered reasonable.

3. Supplemental Mapping Document

The Government of Canada supports the Board’s proposed approach to displaying and describing land use zones for the 5-year review of the Sahtu Land Use Plan as outlined in the *Supplemental Mapping (DRAFT)* document. To ensure consistency throughout the revised Plan, it is recommend the layout of maps follow a standard template that clearly presents information, similar to the presentation of maps as part of the *Supplemental Mapping (DRAFT)* document.

As a point of clarification, on Page 3 in the “*Purpose*” section of the Supplemental Mapping document the term small scale maps should be replaced by large scale maps. A series of large scale maps (i.e. close up) are provided in this document to provide additional detail to approving parties. In contrast, a small scale map shows a larger area (e.g. the entire Sahtu Settlement Area).