



14 February 2018

Sent by Email

Heather Bourassa, chair
Sahtú Land Use Planning Board
P.O. Box 235
Fort Good Hope, NT
X0E 0H0

RE: Process for Amendments to the Sahtú Land Use Plan

Dear Ms. Bourassa

Máhsi Cho for the email dated January 23, 2018, sending us the *Sahtú Land Use Plan, The First 5 Years: A Look Back to Move Forward* with the request for comments, which outlines the need for and potential scope for amendments of the Sahtú Land Use Plan (SLUP). The Déljñę Got'jñę Government (DGG) looks forward to the opportunity of participating in the amendment process, both at the current phase of scoping what that amendment process will be, and later in providing input into specific appropriate amendments.

We are writing to express concern about the proposed process for seeking input on the discussion document, and thus on the scoping of the amendment process. As you know, in our district we are now operating under the self government regime of the Déljñę Final Self Government Agreement (DFSGA), which has implications for land use planning at the regional and local level.

The DGG is concerned that the proposal for participation in the review of the Sahtú Land Use Plan does not reflect the spirit or practical realities of DGG self government. The existence of the new self government framework is not reflected at all in the discussion document. The suggested process for engagement in order to seek feedback on the discussion document, and thus the scoping of the amendment process, is deficient from a consultation perspective. It proposes to take limited input from the DGG, only in writing. It proposes to have in-person meetings with only the SSI, NWT and Canada and not with the DGG.

With the practical aspects of amended land use decision-making for the Déljñę region, we think that excluding the DGG from in-person meetings to consider the scope of the amendment process is both practically and legally questionable. We note that the MVRMA has been amended to reflect a number of land use decision making functions where the DGG has authority to override other planning authorities (see for example section 90.11), reflecting the transfer of day-to-day decision-making authority to DGG over a number of land use permitting



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functions. Engagement of DGG as a regional government is key for successful land use planning in the evolving context of self government.

We are also concerned that the suggested process for seeking input on the draft discussion paper (and thus the scope and process for amending the SLUP) limits the participation of Dene citizens in the Déljné region. We are aware that our community members have important information about historic and emerging land use planning concerns, and questions about what decisions should be made to protect their interests in the lands and resources in the region. Yet the process for seeking input on the discussion paper and on scoping on the amendment process includes no opportunities for them to orally hear updates and information (so that they understand what is being proposed and the SLUP's view of the anticipated key issues in the amendment process), or to provide oral input. The only opportunity for engagement is in written form, which does not meet the cultural and practical needs of the Dene public at large in our region.

We therefore respectfully request:

1. That the SLUP Board meet in person with the DGG, in addition to the other "approving authorities", to discuss the proper scope of, and process for, the amendment process.
2. That the SLUP Board work with DGG to arrange for a public community meeting in Déljné to orally present the discussion paper, proposed process for amending the land use plan, the SLUP's sense of key issues for the amendment process, and to take information and oral input from community members on the process and key issues in the amendment process. This will ensure that our community members have the culturally appropriate and practical opportunity to understand the amendment process and issues and provide input on matters which deeply affect the exercise of Dene land and resource rights.
3. That the SLUP Board consider how the implementation of the DFSGA (and other anticipated FSGA in the region) should affect the scope of the land use plan amendment process, and provide a written response to the DGG that summarizes the SLUP's views on this matter.

We look forward to your response.

Máhsi

Raymond Tutcho

ʔekw'ahtjé

Déljné Got'jné Government

cc. Sahtú Secretariate Incorporated