

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Environmental Monitoring Advisory Board Opposes Request from Diavik for Early Shutdown of Independent Environmental Oversight Body**

**Yellowknife, NT — May 12, 2026** — The Environmental Monitoring Advisory Board (EMAB) has responded to a request by Diavik Diamond Mines Inc. (DDMI) to shut down EMAB by March 2027. EMAB is calling for continued independent oversight of the Diavik Mine and regulatory process through final closure and post-closure monitoring. EMAB also stated that its role in bringing forward community perspectives and concerns is a crucial part of its independent oversight. EMAB further stated that early termination of the Board would reduce environmental oversight during this critical phase of the mine and may not align with the public interest.

On February 7, 2026, the GNWT Minister of Environment and Climate Change initiated a consultation on a request by DDMI to shut EMAB down by March 31, 2027. EMAB submitted a detailed response to the Minister on April 8, 2026. The Minister is expected to make a decision by end of June.

The Environmental Agreement (EA) for the Diavik mine was established as a condition of the project's approval, as a measure to mitigate potential negative environmental effects and public concern. EMAB is a core part of the EA, and the watchdog on its implementation.

"EMAB was created to work on behalf of affected communities and the public to ensure accountability and transparency," said Charlie Catholique, EMAB's Chair. "Shutting down the independent oversight body for Diavik before closure would eliminate a valuable source of independent oversight and community input, would weaken continuity in oversight during closure, and could reduce public confidence during one of the most important phases of the project."

EMAB highlights its unique role as an independent body that:

- Includes representation from Indigenous communities from all areas in the NWT and Nunavut potentially affected by the mine,
- Monitors environmental impacts and Diavik's commitments,
- Provides oversight of both the company and regulatory processes,
- Brings forward Indigenous knowledge and community perspectives, and
- Communicates with Affected Communities and the public.

The Board disagrees with Diavik's position that its work duplicates regulatory functions, noting that EMAB was specifically designed to involve Indigenous Parties, particularly those that may not have the capacity to be regularly involved in the ongoing regulatory processes, in providing additional independent oversight of both the mine and regulators, not replace or replicate existing regulators.

Importantly, EMAB stresses that mine closure is a critical phase of the project, involving long-term environmental uncertainties and a minimal on-site presence. Moreover, there are no examples of a mine that has successfully completed its full lifecycle—from development and operation through closure and reclamation in the NWT. Continued independent monitoring and sustained community involvement

will therefore be essential to support effective reclamation, protect the environment, and avoid of public liability and perpetual care obligations.

Rather than shutting down, EMAB is proposing an evidence-based and phased wind-down approach that aligns with actual closure progress. This includes ongoing monitoring through closure and post-closure, with scheduled reassessments as conditions evolve.

“EMAB remains committed to working with all Parties, including Diavik, to ensure the Diavik site is responsibly closed and that commitments to communities are upheld,” said Charlie Catholique. “A gradual and orderly wind-down—based on facts and environmental outcomes—is the right way to close the mine.”

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**Backgrounder:**

**The Environmental Agreement:**

The 51-page Environmental Agreement (EA) is a legally-binding contract signed by five Indigenous Parties (Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Łutselk’e Dene First Nation, North Slave Metis Alliance, Tłı̄chǫ Government, and Yellowknives Dene First Nation), the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Government of Canada, and Diavik Diamond Mine (a wholly owned subsidiary of Rio Tinto). The Agreement was signed in 2000 and the term continues until full and final reclamation and abandonment of the site, and completion of any and all post-closure monitoring and maintenance. It includes Purposes and Guiding Principles and establishes monitoring and management requirements for the Diavik mine. It also establishes the Environmental Monitoring Advisory Board (EMAB) as the implementation body for monitoring under the EA.

**EA Section 18.3:**

Section 18.3 of the EA gives the Minister the authority to set a schedule for winding down EMAB. EMAB’s understanding of wind-down is a gradual decrease of work over time, not a shut down. The EA depends on EMAB to ensure it is properly implemented by making it the watchdog over the implementation of the Agreement (EA section 4.2((c)). The EA also sets EMAB’s broad mandate to carry out during the full term of the EA, including reviewing all monitoring reports and making recommendations about them, as well as the many other parts of EMAB’s mandate (EA section 4.2).

**The Environmental Monitoring Advisory Board:**

The Environmental Monitoring Advisory Board (EMAB) is an independent body responsible for monitoring the Diavik Diamond Mine and its regulators, as well as the implementation of the EA. EMAB's priorities focus on the quality of water and air, the health of wildlife and fish, and the incorporation of Traditional Knowledge in environmental monitoring. The Board members are appointed by each Party. EMAB makes recommendations to Diavik and the other Parties to improve environmental management plans, monitoring programs and interpretation of monitoring results. The Board has a broad mandate to review and make recommendations about western science and Traditional Knowledge reporting, participating in regulatory processes, involvement of Indigenous people and communities in environmental monitoring and implementation, and reporting and providing information to the Parties and the public. EMAB's annual budget is approx. \$600K. For more information go to [emab.ca](http://emab.ca).