WORKING WITH THE PEOPLE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Meeting Notes – Aug 11, 2026
Zoom call

Present:

Charlie Catholique, *Chair*	Łutselk'e Dene First Nation
Marc Whitford, *Vice-Chair*	North Slave Métis Alliance
Violet Camsell-Blondin, *Secretary-Treasurer*	Tłı̨chǫ Government
Baba Pedersen, *Director*	Kitikmeot Inuit Association
Adi Adiele, *Director*	Yellowknives Dene First Nation
Tara Marchiori, *Director*	Diavik Diamond Mines
Sarah Elsasser, *Director*	GNWT-ECC

Staff:

John McCullum, *Executive Director*	EMAB (minutes)
Karina Kramer, *Environmental Specialist*	EMAB (minutes)

Absent:

Guests:

Tuesday Aug 11, 2026
Meeting started at 10:10 a.m. by Zoom

Opening prayer – Charlie Catholique

Item 1 – Response to Minister's Decision on Shutting Down EMAB

Baba Pedersen declared that he has been appointed as a Senior Advisor to the West Kitikmeot Resources Corp regarding the Grays Bay project. He doesn't see a conflict with his EMAB responsibilities but wanted to be transparent.

Violet Camsell-Blondin noted that she sits on the Arctic Security Corridor Steering Committee.

Q: who went to Diavik for TK Monitoring in late July?
A: about 20 people attended.

ED presents item from kit.

Discussion:

- Part of reduction in EMAB engagement with communities results from reduced support from the mine. EMAB needs a larger budget for community engagement.
- Noted that EMAB sets its budget.
- YKDFN has not seen any EMAB engagement in recent years.

Q: what is situation with IEMA and Ekati?
A: IEMA has not received its payment for this fiscal year – they have approached the receiver and GNWT regarding the EA Security Deposit.

- Minister's decision is upsetting news. ECC does not take care of KIA's interests with respect to Diavik. Disagree with Minister's decision.
- EMAB should not do a legal challenge; should get a legal opinion.
- EMAB should not accept this decision; should request this be reviewed.
- Talk to media explaining whey we disagree with Minister's decision; avoid arguing with ECC through the media.
- Agrees with previous comments; wants to see this decision reversed.
- Should get a legal opinion regarding applicability of EA dispute resolution section.
- GNWT has not addressed all of EMAB's concerns in its decision.
- EMAB ensures environment is protected.
- Angry about Minister's decision; seems like industry is in control.
- During environmental assessment people wanted as many controls as possible on Diavik; they wanted an environmental watchdog to avoid repeating history.
- TEK hasn't worked out the way people had hoped; Indigenous people did not control the TK monitoring. No caribou monitoring.
- Closing EMAB reduces confidence in mines.
- Very disappointed in Minister's decision.
- Elders provided data to Diavik; they were told there would not be environmental impacts.
- Doesn't like the way Diavik is doing business with First Nations.
- EMAB is a watchdog; the company doesn't want EMAB.
- EMAB should continue to 2035.
- Company will be gone but community people will be here forever.
- EMAB needs legal advice.
- Diavik is no longer listening to communities.
- EMAB should continue.
- EMAB's work is important.
- Community interest should be at the forefront.

- Minister relies on staff to provide the right advice.
- EMAB should get into the communities more often; do more engagement.
- EMAB could request Minister re-consider decision.
- YKDFN considers EMAB's work to be important.
- EMAB should do a TK study of Diavik with Elders; how can TK remediate?
- Avoid embarrassing ECC or Diavik but aim for revised decision.
- Stay out of media.
- Sad decision but difficult to disagree with it based on the evidence.
    - Only 2 Parties supported EMAB continuing; one Party didn't provide anything.
    - YKDFN supported wind-down by March 2027.
- YKDFN clarified it did not identify a date for the transition; there is a need for EMAB functions to continue.
- EMAB members have their own biases.
- Not comfortable saying consultation was inadequate; still concerned about legal letter.
- Hard to disagree with decision when Parties didn't support EMAB.
- There is a difference between the Minister not considering EMAB evidence and not agreeing with it.
- Hard to agree that EMAB should be around until full and final closure when EA section 18.3 says it can be wound down.
- There is no concrete evidence that the Minister didn't consider EMAB's points.
- GNWT has a letter from EMAB saying consultation was inadequate; why spend money on another legal letter saying the same thing?
    - Clarification that the legal advice would be whether the dispute resolution mechanism could apply to the Minister's decision.
- Believes it's up to the Parties to disagree with Minister's decision; supports a letter saying EMAB disagrees with the decision.
- Note that DeBeers requested SLEMA wind-down in 2029 – this is a key difference compared to EMAB's situation where Diavik requested EMAB wind down by 2027.
- Need to be honest about the evidence.
- Need the signatory Parties to challenge the decision.
- EMAB should focus on next steps to wind down.
- Agrees that there should be more input from communities on requesting reconsideration of decision. EMAB should go through communities.

Q: how would regular MLA's be involved in a decision like this?

A: there would not be any direct input from the regular MLA's.

- Consensus is that EMAB request the Minister re-consider decision. How long might that take? We need to keep the Minister's directives in mind. There is a risk in not carrying these out.
- Doesn't believe dispute resolution section of EA would apply.

- Some people who signed the EA are not around now. It shouldn't be up to the Minister to decide. It will take time to go back to the Parties to ask for support.
- Disagreement that there is consensus to ask Minister to re-consider.
- Board should focus on successful wind-down.
- Comfortable responding to Minister that EMAB disagrees.
- It is up to Board members to provide leadership with the Parties.
- EMAB is here to protect the land.
- Doesn't agree to roll over and accept the decision.
- Board seems to feel that it's the only safety net for environmental protection, and the only way for Parties to be involved in oversight.
- Proponents are viewed with some suspicion; it is premature to throw EMAB out the door.
- EMAB decisions shouldn't be driven by Minister's timeline.
- We need to get community buy-in.
- EMAB is the best way for all Parties to have a voice at the same time.
- EMAB should prepare for winding down while also going back to the Minister.
- Agreed to continue meeting after break for lunch; postpone item on strategic planning to October meeting.

Lunch – 12:05 to 1:30

Item 1 continued

All present except Adi who had a prior commitment.

Discussion

- The majority disagree with the Minister's decision and want to request he re-consider.
- Letter should provide reasons for request.
- Inform media that EMAB is disappointed with the decision and wants the Minister to re-consider.
- EMAB should get legal advice for Board discussion.
- Revise EMAB workplan as per Minister's decision while trying to extend wind-down.
- Avoid boxing ourselves in.
- Clarify Indigenous reps disagree with decision; it would be frivolous to re-hash previous arguments.
- Communities weren't properly engaged in Minister's consultation.
- Keep this out of the media until Minister responds to EMAB's request.
- Not going to change Parties responses.

- Confident that KIA agrees with EMAB and disagrees with the Minister's decision.
- It is not re-hashing if the Minister didn't address EMAB's original evidence in his decision.
- Still believes that we are stronger working together; this is in the interests of the people and the environment.
- Regarding proposed options:
    - Letter to Minister needs to avoid re-hashing old issues and be non-confrontational
    - Don't do a media release
    - Request MLA support
    - Request legal advice regarding EA Dispute Resolution clause; keep costs in mind.

Q: What would EMAB request for legal advice?

A: Whether we can use the EA Dispute Resolution clause for the Minister's decision.

- Shouldn't try to challenge use of EA section 18.3.
- Minister hasn't addressed some of EMAB's concerns from our original response.
- Keep in mind legal can be expensive; EMAB has limited remaining budget.
- Legal advice on the dispute resolution clause would be useful; get some certainty.
- Agrees on the value of legal advice, but need to meet with Minister.
- EMAB should continue monitoring.
- EMAB should be around for the life of the water licence.
- Not confident Minister will act on behalf of Kitikmeot region.
- Board should review draft of letter to Minister; also provide a draft of the legal question to the Board.
- If Minister declines to re-consider decision, EMAB should go to dispute resolution; also involve MLA's: Richard Edjericon, Robert Hawkins, Kieron Testart.
- Avoid being confrontational with Minister.
- If Minister disagrees our only option is arbitration.
- Don't want to go beyond dispute resolution.
- Request Chair, Vice-Chair and staff meet with Minister.
- No comment to media.
- Meeting with Minister is to request he reverse his decision? He has already decided, so what can we say?
- We need to make our arguments are compelling.
- Minister will have officials; need to plan carefully.
- Media response will set the tone for the letter. Keep it simple; something like: EMAB is disappointed and will follow up with Minister.
- Proposed draft media response in Zoom Chat; say EMAB is reviewing decision. Don't say EMAB is challenging the decision. Don't do a media release.
- Need to request a face-to-face meeting with the Minister; be respectful.
- Draft request to legal for Board to review – hold off for now until meeting with Minister.

- EMAB will rely on Board members to ask Parties for support to reverse the Minister's decision; EMAB will not send a letter directly.
- Don't contact MLA's at this time. Avoid creating any embarrassment for Minister.
- If Minister refuses to re-consider then we can invoke the EA dispute resolution mechanism.
- ED will draft a revised workplan for closure on March 31, 2027 concurrently with the other actions.

Action Items: ED to draft letter to Minister requesting a meeting and for him to re-consider decision as per Board direction, for Board review and approval.

Follow proposed media response if media contacts EMAB. Don't do a media release.

Hold off on drafting request to legal regarding application of dispute resolution.

ED to prepare revised workplan based on Minister's Decision direction.

Closing

Next meeting

- October 20-22 (including AGM)

Meeting Adjourned at 3:15 pm

Closing Prayer: Charlie Catholique