



File: 30200-20/TENCO-16

Reference: 378864

August 27, 2021

SENT VIA EMAIL

Pat Moss
Executive Director
Northwest Institute for Bioregional Research
pat@northwestinstitute.ca

Dear Pat Moss:

Thank you for your letter of April 30, 2021, regarding funding to participate in the environmental assessment (EA) of Telkwa Coal Limited's (TCL) proposed Tenas Coal Project (Tenas Project).

As you are aware, the EA process includes opportunities for stakeholders and the public to participate, provide input, and be informed about proposed and certified projects, recommendations, decisions, consultation and communication. At this time, however, we do not have a program for public participation funding.

Public Input and Technical Expertise on the Tenas Project

As you are also aware, the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) invited public comments on the Tenas Project's draft Application Information Requirements (AIR) document during a public comment period from June 8 to July 23, 2020. During this time the EAO hosted two virtual open houses on June 17, 2020, and June 23, 2020. As part of that, the Northwest Institute for Bioregional Research provided comments on the draft AIR regarding potential project impacts on water quality in the nearby environment. You will find your comments and response to those comments from TCL included in a Pre-Application Public Consultation Report, available on our EPIC website [here](#).

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Looking ahead, members of the public will also have an opportunity to comment on TCL's Application for an Environmental Certificate (the Application) and on the EAO's draft Assessment Report. Additional documents related to the Tenas Project can be found on the EAO's [EPIC website](#).

Along with seeking public input and comment, the EAO establishes a Working Group to review and provide advice on EA materials, including the proponent's Application. The Tenas Project's Working Group currently includes representatives of Indigenous nations, local governments, and provincial and federal government agencies (both technical experts and other regulators). The Working Group brings expertise in assessing potential impacts on water quality, air quality, fish and fish habitat, wildlife, and human health, among others.

Specific to the water quality concerns you raise, the EAO has engaged experts on the Working Group from the BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy; the BC Ministry of Energy, Mines, and Low Carbon Innovation; Environment and Climate Change Canada; and Office of the Wet'suwet'en to assess potential impacts on water quality from the Tenas Project. This includes advising the EAO on the assessment of effects and the adequacy of mitigation measures. Throughout the assessment process, the advice and technical review provided by the Working Group will be posted on the project-specific EPIC page and available to the public.

Environmental Assessment Revitalization and Public Engagement Funding

Your letter references statements made in the [Environmental Assessment Revitalization Intentions paper](#). The Environmental Assessment Revitalization Intentions Paper outlines a suite of public engagement enhancements, some of which have been implemented and others that are being developed. The *Environmental Assessment Act* (2018) (the 2018 Act) itself does not have a specific provision for providing public participation funding and as such any program would be established via policy, not a regulation.

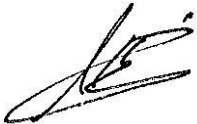
When the 2018 Act came into force in 2019 the EAO's priority was to ensure that the necessary regulations and policies were in place to support the successful implementation of the 2018 Act. Work related to engaging with Indigenous nations, the new Early Engagement phase, and new Community Advisory Committees was prioritised. As you are aware, the Tenas Project is undergoing an environmental assessment under the *Environmental Assessment Act* (2002) (the 2002 Act), and will follow requirements of the 2002 Act and as outlined in the [Section 11 Order](#).

The EAO continues to advance other Environmental Assessment Revitalization objectives, including options for public participation funding. I encourage you to join our [mailing list](#) to be notified of engagement opportunities that inform the way the EAO conducts its work and engages with the public.

Consistent with previous engagement on the Tenas Project, the EAO project team is available to meet with you and any other community interest groups to specifically discuss any questions or concerns that you may have. While the EAO encourages community groups and other interested parties to participate in project environmental assessments, unfortunately at this time the EAO is not able to provide any financial funding to support their participation.

Thank you again for your interest in the Tenas Project's environmental assessment process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Bailey', written in a cursive style.

Scott Bailey
Acting Associate Deputy Minister and
Chief Executive Assessment Officer

cc: Tracey Janes, Project Assessment Director,
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