



Canadian Environmental
Assessment Agency

Agence canadienne
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Synopsis of Comments Received During Initial Public Comment Period

Environmental Assessment of the Proposed Raven Underground Coal Mine Project under the
Canadian Environmental Assessment Act

The Raven Underground Coal Mine Project (the project) is subject to the comprehensive study requirements of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (the Act). As per the requirements of the Act, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency) provided an initial opportunity for the public to provide input on the federal environmental assessment of the project between July 19 and September 20, 2010. The objective of that comment period was to seek the early views of the public on the potential environmental effects of concern with respect to the project to ensure that those issues are considered in the environmental assessment.

Approximately 1900 public comments were received, with many individuals providing multiple submissions. Issues identified included: impacts to freshwater quality and quantity (including groundwater and aquifer mapping), marine water quality, fish and fish habitat, Baynes Sound aquaculture, wildlife, highway safety, the local eco-tourism economy, climate change, public health (including air quality and drinking water quality), property values, and increased risk of shipping accidents including fuel and coal spills in Alberni Inlet. All comments that were submitted are considered public and are part of the Registry's project file and are publicly accessible upon request.

The environmental issues identified in the comments received have been reviewed by the federal government and will be used to help define the requirements of the proponent in addressing the environmental effects of the project as defined in the Act. As part of the cooperative environmental assessment process with British Columbia, these information requirements will be included in the Application Information Requirements document, which defines the issues that must be addressed by the proponent as part of the environmental assessment. A draft version of the Application Information Requirements will be made available for public comment prior to being finalized.

Comments were also received from the public indicating that they would like the project rejected outright or referred to an independent joint federal/provincial expert review panel. Under the Act, the Minister of the Environment has the authority to refer a project to a mediator or a review panel if the Minister determines that a project may cause significant adverse environmental effects after taking into account the implementation of any appropriate mitigation measures or that public concerns with respect to the environmental effects warrant a referral.

At this time, after considering the project information received to date from the proponent and the comments from the public, the Agency and other federal departments have not identified significant adverse environmental effects that may result from the project after applying standard mitigation measures. The project will continue to be assessed as a comprehensive study. The Agency will monitor issues raised by the public throughout the environmental assessment process.

