



Prairie and Northern Region Région des Prairies et du Nord
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November 12, 2020

Brianne England
Manager – Applications
Environmental Assessment and Stewardship Branch
Ministry of Environment
Government of Saskatchewan

Sent via e-mail: brianne.england@gov.sk.ca

Subject: Designation Request pursuant to the *Impact Assessment Act* for the Great Sandhills Railway Switching Operation at North West Terminal Project

Dear Brianne England:

On October 21, 2020, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (the Minister) received a request to designate a proposed railway yard expansion at the North West Terminal, approximately one kilometre east of the town of Unity, Saskatchewan proposed by Great Sandhills Railway Ltd. (the proponent) under subsection 9(1) of the *Impact Assessment Act* (IAA).

The Project

On November 6, 2020, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) terminated the impact assessment process for the Great Sandhills Railway Switching Operation at North West Terminal Project at the request of the proponent. On October 9th, 2020, the proponent revised the track design of the proposed railway yard expansion of the existing North West Terminal, a grain handling facility located one kilometre east of Unity, Saskatchewan. The project is hereafter referred to as Great Sandhills Railway Switching Operation at North West Terminal Project – Revised Design (the Project) (enclosure 1) and is the subject of this request to apply subsection 9(1) of IAA.

Designation Request

Under subsection 9(1) of IAA the Minister may, by order, designate a physical activity that is not prescribed in the Physical Activities Regulations. The Minister may do this, if, in the Minister's opinion, the physical activity may cause adverse effects within federal jurisdiction or adverse direct or incidental effects (resulting from federal decisions, including funding), or public concerns related to those effects warrant the designation. In accordance with subsection 9(4) of IAA, it is expected that the Minister will respond, with reasons, to the request by January 19, 2020.



The Agency will review information about the Project; any concerns expressed (that the Agency is aware of) from the public and Indigenous groups; expert advice from federal authorities; and input from provincial ministries in order to inform the Minister on whether the Project should be designated. If designated, to proceed with the Project, Great Sandhills Railway Ltd. would be required to submit an Initial Project Description, thereby commencing the planning phase of IAA. In that case, the planning phase would include the Agency determining whether a federal impact assessment is required.

Additional information regarding the process for designation requests can be found at the following link: <https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/services/policy-guidance/designating-project-impact-assessment-act.html>.

In the coming days, a Registry page for the Project will be available on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry Internet site and include the incoming request to designate the Project.

Thank you for your comments pursuant to our request of September 21, 2020 for the now-terminated Great Sandhills Railway Switching Operation at North West Terminal Project. Please confirm if these comments are still applicable to the revised project design of October 9, 2020 and if they should be considered as part of the designation request process for this Project. Should you have any amendments or further comments to provide given the redesign of the railway yard expansion, please provide your input by November 20, 2020.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at (587) 357-6484 or by e-mail at Shelly.Boss@canada.ca.

Sincerely,

<Original signed by>

Shelly Boss
Project Manager, Prairie and Northern Region

Enclosure 1 – Project Map