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Toronto ON M5J 1R7

Impact Assessment  
Agency of Canada

Région de l'Ontario  
600-55, rue York  
Toronto (Ontario) M5J 1R7

Agence d'évaluation  
d'impact du Canada

December 9, 2024

Sent by email

Chief Alex Batisse  
Matachewan First Nation  
P.O. Box 160  
Matachewan ON P0K 1M0  
<email address removed>

Dear Chief Alex Batisse:

**Subject: Commencement of Public Comment Period on the Impact Statement for the Crawford Nickel Project**

On November 22, 2024, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) received an Impact Statement for the Crawford Nickel Project (the Project) prepared by Canada Nickel Company (the Proponent) to provide the required information and studies as set out in the Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines<sup>1</sup> (TISG) and required for the conduct of the impact assessment.

The purpose of this letter is to:

- notify you that the Impact Statement is adequate to proceed with a comment period and technical review;
- invite you to participate in the current comment period and review the Proponent's Impact Statement Summary and Impact Statement for the Project;
- highlight opportunities to collaborate with IAAC in the impact assessment for the Project; and
- invite Matachewan First Nation to meet with IAAC to discuss the Impact Statement and your views on the potential impacts from the Project on Matachewan First Nation.

**Submission and Verification Review of the Impact Statement**

On November 22, 2024, IAAC received an Impact Statement from the Proponent. The Impact Statement is a technical document prepared by

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<sup>1</sup> <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/147481>

the Proponent that contains the information requirements set out in TISG and required for the conduct of the assessment. The Impact Statement Summary is a plain-language summary of the Impact Statement and is available in both English and French. The full Impact Statement is available in English only.

Following a verification review, IAAC determined that the Impact Statement was adequate and contains information to proceed with the public comment period. The Impact Statement Summary, the full Impact Statement, and IAAC's correspondence to the Proponent on the outcome of the verification review are available on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry webpage (Reference #83857) for the Project<sup>2</sup>.

### **Public comment period on the Impact Statement**

To seek input on the summary of the Impact Statement, IAAC is conducting a **60-day comment period** from December 9, 2024, to February 7, 2025. IAAC is requesting comments from participating Indigenous communities, federal authorities, provincial ministries, and the public on the summary of the Impact Statement for the Crawford Nickel Project. IAAC would appreciate any comments from Matachewan First Nation by the end of the comment period. The summary of the Impact Statement for the Crawford Nickel Project is attached to this letter for your review and consideration (**Enclosure 1**).

IAAC is interested in receiving Matachewan First Nation's views regarding, but not limited to, the following key areas:

1. The potential adverse effects within federal jurisdiction of the Project as described under section 2 of the *Impact Assessment Act* (IAA), specifically:
  - a. with respect to the Indigenous peoples of Canada, a non-negligible adverse impact — occurring in Canada and resulting from any change to the environment — on:
    - i. physical and cultural heritage
    - ii. the current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes
    - iii. any structure, site or thing that is of historical, archaeological, paleontological or architectural significance.
  - b. a non-negligible adverse change occurring in Canada to the health, social or economic conditions of the Indigenous peoples of Canada.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/83857>

2. The potential impacts of the Project on Matachewan First Nation's exercise of Aboriginal and treaty rights.
3. The suitability of the proposed mitigation measures and/or follow-up programs to address potential impacts.

When providing your comments, please reference the section of the Impact Statement your comments refer to, as well as any context or background that may help IAAC better understand your views.

The information Matachewan First Nation provides throughout the assessment will assist IAAC in understanding potential impacts to your community and your community's exercise of rights and determining whether additional information from the Proponent will be requested to support this understanding.

### **How to provide your comments**

Comments on the Project can be provided to [Crawford@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:Crawford@iaac-aeic.gc.ca) or through the "Submit a Comment" function available on the project page of the Registry (Reference #83857). Users of this feature must agree to the Submission Policy for submissions on the Registry<sup>3</sup>. If you have any questions or difficulties submitting your comments on the Registry, please contact IAAC at [information@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:information@iaac-aeic.gc.ca) or [Crawford@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:Crawford@iaac-aeic.gc.ca) for assistance. Please refer to the Important Note below before submitting information to IAAC.

### **Invitation to meet with IAAC and to attend an information session**

To answer any questions you may have about the above-mentioned documents and to discuss consultation planning specific to Matachewan First Nation, IAAC has proposed organizing an in-person meeting and contacted Kayla Schram on November 26, 2024, to discuss this further.

Further, IAAC invites any interested members of your community to participate in a public information session via Zoom to learn more about the Project, the federal review process, the summary of the Impact Statement, and how to submit comments. Online information sessions will be held on the following dates:

- Thursday December 19, 2024, 6:00-7:30pm ET
- Wednesday January 8, 2025, 6:00-7:30pm ET

For more information on how to attend a session, please visit the project homepage on the Registry and click "Information Sessions."

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<sup>3</sup> <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/participation/conditions>

## **Collaboration Opportunities**

### Technical Working Group for the Project

As set out in the Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan<sup>4</sup> for the Project, IAAC is committed to advancing the Government of Canada's commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by supporting collaborative and Indigenous-led approaches to conducting assessments with potentially affected Indigenous communities.

As part of these collaborative efforts, IAAC established a Technical Working Group to bring potentially impacted Indigenous communities, the Proponent, the government review team (experts from federal departments and provincial ministries), and IAAC together to discuss key technical issues within federal jurisdiction. IAAC appreciates Matachewan First Nation's input in the development of the Terms of Reference and participation in the previous meetings on March 27, 2024, and June 18-19, 2024.

On November 26, 2024, IAAC contacted Matachewan First Nation to confirm your interest in continued participation in the Project's Technical Working Group. Conversations regarding next steps for the Technical Working Group are underway with member communities to determine whether and how the Technical Working Group may be of continued interest to support the needs of member communities moving forward. IAAC intends to continue supporting opportunities for technical discussions with communities throughout the Project's impact assessment.

### Matachewan First Nation's Interest in Co-drafting

In Matachewan First Nation's application for contribution funding submitted to IAAC, Matachewan First Nation indicated interest in co-drafting the Impact Assessment Report. In particular, IAAC can support Matachewan First Nation in co-drafting the section of the Impact Assessment Report regarding impacts from the Project to Matachewan First Nation's exercise of rights. On November 20, 2024, IAAC sent your community information via email regarding opportunities to co-draft the section of the Impact Assessment Report on impacts from the Project to Matachewan First Nation and your exercise of rights.

IAAC will reach out to Matachewan First Nation to confirm interest and continue discussion with your community regarding this opportunity. Please feel free to contact me at [Crawford@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:Crawford@iaac-aeic.gc.ca) or (437) 518-5692 should you have any questions.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/147339>

### **Next Steps for the Impact Assessment**

After the public comment period and technical review of the Impact Statement, IAAC will consider all input received and will determine whether additional information from the Proponent will be requested.

As per Section 19(4) of the IAA, once IAAC has determined that the Proponent has provided all the required information or studies to conduct the assessment, IAAC will post a notice to this effect on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry website. IAAC will continue to notify Matachewan First Nation as new information becomes available and will post any relevant correspondence or documents to the Registry.

IAAC will consider information in the Impact Statement along with information to date that your community has provided to update IAAC's understanding of the potential impacts of the Project on your community and your exercise of rights, including on the health, social, and economic conditions of your community. The information shared by Matachewan First Nation was last updated on May 17, 2024, based on information obtained during the Impact Statement phase, and is attached in **Enclosure 2** of this letter for your reference. Once updated, IAAC will invite your community to review, validate, and add to the information included in **Enclosure 2** so it can inform the assessment of impacts on your community's exercise of rights, the impact assessment process, and the development of IAAC's Impact Assessment Report.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Information submitted to IAAC to inform this project assessment may be posted online to the Registry (Reference #83857) subject to certain exceptions related to privacy, security or confidentiality. IAAC's Submission Policy describes what submitted information can be shared publicly, and what should remain private. For more information on how we protect your privacy, please refer to the Privacy Notice<sup>5</sup>.

Indigenous Knowledge shared in confidence is protected from disclosure, as described in our guidance about confidential Indigenous Knowledge<sup>6</sup> except if written consent is provided, or if the information is publicly available. In addition, Indigenous Knowledge shared in confidence could be shared with certain parties if disclosure is necessary for procedural fairness and natural justice or for use in legal proceedings. This ensures that interested persons have a fair opportunity to participate in processes

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/protection>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/services/policy-guidance/practitioners-guide-impact-assessment-act/protecting-confidential-indigenous-knowledge-under-the-impact-assessment-act.html>

that would likely affect their interests, and that they have access to all necessary information and evidence relied on by the decision-maker.

Should you wish to provide any comments or documents that contain confidential or sensitive information that should be protected from release to the public, please contact IAAC **before** submitting the information. This will ensure that your submission is handled appropriately. Note, IAAC will consult with you prior to disclosing Indigenous Knowledge shared in confidence under an exemption.

Thank you for your participation in the impact assessment process to date, we look forward to continuing working together. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 437-518-5692 or by email at [Crawford@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:Crawford@iaac-aeic.gc.ca).

Sincerely,

<original signed by>

Larissa Goshulak  
Senior Consultation Analyst, Ontario Region

Enclosures: Enclosure 1: Summary of the Impact Statement for the  
Crawford Nickel Project  
Enclosure 2: Summary of information on potential impacts of  
the Crawford Nickel Project on Matachewan First Nation

c.c.: Jason Batise, Wabun Tribal Council  
Melanie Boucher, Matachewan First Nation  
Nicole Charbonneau, Wabun Tribal Council  
Delta Flood, Matachewan First Nation  
Stan Fox, Matachewan First Nation  
Kayla Schram, Matachewan First Nation