



Impact Assessment  
Agency of Canada

Ontario Region  
600-55 York Street  
Toronto ON M5J 1R7

Agence d'évaluation  
d'impact du Canada

Région de l'Ontario  
600-55 rue York  
Toronto ON M5J 1R7

February 21, 2023

Sent by email

**Correspondence to Municipalities**

James McPherson, Municipality of Greenstone  
Ken Boshcoff, City of Thunder Bay  
Doug Lawrance, Municipality of Sioux Lookout  
James Dalzell, Township of Pickle Lake

Dear Mayors,

**Subject: Comments Welcomed on the Potential Impacts of the Proposed Northern Road Link Project**

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) received an acceptable Initial Project Description for the Northern Road Link Project (the Project), from Marten Falls First Nation and Webequie First Nation (the Proponent).

On February 21, 2023, the planning phase of the federal impact assessment process will begin. The Initial Project Description and the Summary of the Initial Project Description are available on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (Registry) at Internet site (Reference #84331 at <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/84331?culture=en-CA>).

The Agency is conducting a 30-day comment period on the Initial Project Description from February 21, 2023, to March 23, 2023, inviting the public, Indigenous communities and other jurisdictions to provide feedback related to the Project. Your comments are invited as detailed below.

Feedback will help the Agency prepare the Summary of Issues for the Proponent and will inform the Agency's decision as to whether the Project requires an impact assessment. If an impact assessment is required, the feedback would help the Agency prepare draft documents, including the draft Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines for the Proponent and the draft Public Participation Plan.

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### **Northern Road Link Project**

The Proponent is proposing the construction and operation, including maintenance, of an all-season multi-use public highway located in northern Ontario. As proposed, the Project would be about 117 to 164 kilometres long and cross the Attawapiskat River. It would connect the proposed Marten Falls Community Access Road and the proposed Webequie Supply Road. The highway would become part of a future all-season road network connecting mineral development activities in the Ring of Fire area to the provincial highway system at Nakina, Ontario.

### **Invitation to submit comments by March 23, 2023**

The Agency invites your municipality's comments on the Proponent's Initial Project Description. In particular, the Agency seeks your input on the following:

- Has the Proponent appropriately characterized the existing health, social and economic conditions that you consider relevant to the Project? Does your municipality have any community plans or written objectives that could provide additional context?
- What are your key concerns for the municipality with the Project in place? Consider key positive or negative effects on the environment and on health, social, and economic conditions. Consider how the Project may support or hinder your community plans and objectives.
- Has the Proponent identified relevant municipal bylaws, authorizations, or guidelines from your municipality that are applicable to the Project and its potential effects? If not, list all that may apply. What potential effects would these manage, if any? What engagement or consultation with the public and Indigenous communities would be required, if any?
- Identify any preferences for how your municipality would like to be engaged throughout the potential assessment process.

Please submit your comments via the *Submit a Comment* feature available on the Project's Registry page. Letters and comments can be uploaded using this feature. If you have any difficulties, please contact the Agency using the information provided below. The Agency will consider input received **by March 23, 2023**, in the development of the Summary of Issues.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Any information submitted to the Agency to inform this project assessment process will be made publicly available as part of the project file, and may be posted online via the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (Reference #84331), subject to certain exceptions related to privacy, security or confidentiality. The Agency's Submission Policy<sup>1</sup> describes what submitted information can be shared publicly, and what should remain private. For further information on how we protect your privacy, please refer to the Privacy Notice<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/participation/conditions>

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

## Next steps

The Agency will provide the Summary of Issues to the Proponent. The Proponent will prepare and submit a Detailed Project Description, with the Response to the Summary of Issues that includes an explanation of how the Proponent intends to address the issues raised. Following acceptance of the Detailed Project Description, the Agency will decide whether an impact assessment is required.<sup>3</sup>

If the Agency decides that an impact assessment is required for the Project, it would draft Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines and four plans—the Permitting Plan, the Public Participation Plan, the Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan, and the Cooperation Plan. The Agency would hold a second comment period to invite feedback on the draft Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines and draft plans. These documents would be finalized and issued to the Proponent with a notice of commencement of the impact assessment.

During the impact statement phase, the Proponent would be expected to complete the required information and studies set out in the Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines. At the end of the impact assessment process, a decision is made about whether the adverse effects of the Project are in the public interest.

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 Ely Weisbrot at *NorthernRoad-RouteDuNord@iaac-aeic.gc.ca*, or 416-669-2775 **before** submitting the information. This will ensure that your submission is handled appropriately.

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<sup>3</sup> In making its decision, the Agency must take into account the factors set out in subsection <sup>1</sup>6(2) of the *Impact Assessment Act*.

### **Invitation to public information sharing and discussion sessions**

The Agency invites you to attend a virtual public information session via Zoom. These sessions are an opportunity to learn more about the Project and the impact assessment process. Each session will include a question and answer period with representatives from the Agency. Interested participants can select one of the following sessions to join:

- March 14, 2023, 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM EST (English)
- March 15, 2023, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM EST (English)
- March 16, 2023, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM EST (French)

If interested, we invite you to register by email at [NorthernRoad-RouteDuNord@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:NorthernRoad-RouteDuNord@iaac-aeic.gc.ca) in advance of the session with the date you plan to attend. A calendar invite and the link to participate will be provided upon registration.

### **Notice to members of the public**

In addition to the Registry, the Agency uses print, web, radio and social media to advertise public comment periods. We would appreciate your support in making residents aware of the opportunity to comment. If you routinely send notices to residents, please consider posting or forwarding the following message:

*The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada is holding a public comment period from February 21, 2023, to March 23, 2023, on the proposed Northern Road Link Project. Information is available on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry at #84331.*

*Comments can be submitted at the above link. Other inquiries may be directed to [NorthernRoad-RouteDuNord@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:NorthernRoad-RouteDuNord@iaac-aeic.gc.ca).*

*The Agency will host virtual information-sharing and discussion sessions. For more information on how to register and attend, please see the Agency's public notice<sup>4</sup>.*

I can be contacted at [NorthernRoad-RouteDuNord@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:NorthernRoad-RouteDuNord@iaac-aeic.gc.ca) or by phone at 416-669-2775.

Sincerely,

<Original signed by>

Ely Weisbrot  
Project Manager

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<sup>4</sup> <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/84331?culture=en-CA>