



Impact Assessment
Agency of Canada

Ontario Region
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Agence d'évaluation
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May 23, 2023

Sent by email

Correspondence to Federal Review Team

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Dear Colleagues:

Subject: Notification that an impact assessment is required for the Northern Road Link Project and next steps

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) has reviewed the Detailed Project Description and response to the Summary of Issues for the Northern Road Link Project (the Project) submitted by Marten Falls First Nation and Webequie First Nation (the Proponent) on May 1, 2023. On May 11, 2023, the Agency determined that the submission conforms to the requirements of the *Information and Management of Time Limits Regulations*.

Based on the Agency's review of the Detailed Project Description and in consideration of comments received to date from Indigenous communities, federal authorities, provincial ministries and the public, the Agency decided that a federal impact assessment is required for the Project. The Notice of Impact Assessment Decision with Reasons¹ has been posted to the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry Internet site, along with the Detailed Project Description and the response to the Summary of Issues.

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¹ <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/147691>

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Next Steps

The Agency anticipates the **30-day public comment period** will be held **between June 21 2023 and July 21 2023**, on the following documents:

- draft Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines (the Guidelines)
- draft Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan
- draft Public Participation Plan
- draft Permitting Plan
- draft Cooperation Plan

At this time, the Agency requests that your department or agency provide specialist or expert information or knowledge to support development of the Guidelines for the Project and, if applicable, the Permitting Plan, as per paragraph 23(a) of the IAA.

Before the comment period, your subject matter experts and impact assessment coordinators may receive targeted requests from the Agency for the purpose of developing the draft Guidelines and draft Permitting Plan.

During the comment period beginning in June 2023, you will be asked to verify the following:

- required information and studies presented in the draft Guidelines that are available for public comment;
- all regulatory instruments under the authority of your department or agency in the draft Permitting Plan that are anticipated to be required to allow the Project to proceed; and
- the draft Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan and the draft Public Participation Plan, if your department or agency intends to utilize the Agency's consultation efforts when exercising a power or performing a duty or function (including provision of financial assistance) that would permit the carrying out, in whole or in part, of the Project.

When providing feedback, the Agency requests that you consider the approach to tailoring the Guidelines outlined in the *Operational Policy Statement: development of Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines*².

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² <https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/services/policy-guidance/practitioners-guide-impact-assessment-act/operational-policy-statement.html>

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More specifically, the Guidelines should focus on key issues, effects and factors anticipated to be material and relevant to a public interest decision. Federal expert advice should be commensurate to the situational context of the Project and informed by risk-based prudence and evidence in the Proponent's Detailed Project Description³ and response to the Summary of Issues⁴, with strong reliance on well-understood mitigation measures, existing guidance, and regulatory instruments that will manage effects.

Now, your department or agency is also invited to start considering potential complementary measures in respect of the potential adverse effects of the Project. Complementary measures are additional authorities of federal ministers or federal programs that may be used to mitigate effects that may be beyond the care and control of the Proponent. The Minister's decision regarding whether the Project is in the public interest would consider complementary measures. The Agency will work with your department or agency during the impact assessment process to identify relevant policies and programs and develop a list of potential complementary measures for the Project.

By August 18, 2023, the Agency plans to provide to the Proponent the Notice of Commencement of the impact assessment, along with finalized versions of the Guidelines and plans. Please note, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada must decide whether to refer the assessment to a review panel within 45 days after the Notice of Commencement is posted on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry Internet site.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 416-669-2775 or *NorthernRoad-RouteDuNord@iaac-aeic.gc.ca*.

Sincerely,

Weisbrot, Ely <personal information removed>

Ely Weisbrot
Project Manager

c.c.:

Amandeep Chohan, Employment and Social Development Canada
Anica Madzarevic, Natural Resources Canada

³ <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/147653?culture=en-CA>

⁴ <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/147697?culture=en-CA>

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