



NEWS RELEASE

February 29, 2012

Land and Water Boards Release ***Draft Engagement Policy*** and ***Engagement Guidelines for Applicants and Holders of Land Use Permits and Water Licences*** For Public Comment.

February 29, 2012 – The Gwich'in, Sahtu, Wek'èezhìi and Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Boards, through their *Standard Procedures and Consistency Working Group Initiative*, are pleased to announce the release of a *Draft Engagement Policy* (Policy) and a *Draft Engagement Guidelines for Applicants and Holders of Land Use Permits and Water Licences* (Guidelines) for public comment.

The Boards believe that the Policy and the Guidelines, once approved, will help to address some of the concerns raised by Aboriginal governments/organizations and applicants to the regulatory process respecting consultation and engagement. These concerns have been widely documented in various reports, including *Road to Improvement: the Review of the Regulatory Systems Across the North* (the McCrank Report), the *2005 Auditor General's Report* and the 2005 and 2010 NWT Environmental Audits.

The purpose of the draft Policy is to describe the Boards' expectations with respect to proponent engagement. Specifically, the Policy's objectives are to: (a) distinguish between engagement carried out by proponents, the Boards' statutory consultation obligations, and the Crown's duty to consult; and (b) to provide clarity and certainty regarding the Boards' expectations of proponents in relation to engagement activities. The purpose of the Guidelines is to support the Boards' Policy framework for engagement. They aim to assist and guide proponents to conduct engagement activities as required by the Boards by: (a) outlining requirements for engagement activities prior to the submission (pre-submission) of an application or document to the Boards; (b) addressing the requirements for engagement during the life of the project (engagement planning); and (c) providing a list of suggested best practices to increase the likelihood of effective engagement.

The Boards are seeking comments from interested parties by **Monday, April 16, 2012**. The documents and direction on providing public comments can be accessed through any of the Board's websites at:

www.glwb.com

www.slwb.com

www.wlwb.com

www.mvlwb.com

The Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board (MVLWB) operates under the authority of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act of 1998. The MVLWB and the Regional Panels review development applications and issue land use permits and water licences throughout the Mackenzie Valley.

All media inquiries regarding this initiative should be forwarded to Shannon Ward, Senior Advisor – Strategy, Consultation and Communications at the MVLWB [sward@mvlwb.com] (867)766-7458.