

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPONENT: Transportation and Government Services
PROPOSAL NAME: St. Theresa Point/Wasagamack Airstrip
and Connecting Road
CLASS OF DEVELOPMENT: 2
TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT: Transportation
CLIENT FILE NO.: 4699.00

OVERVIEW:

The connecting road component of the project is a Class 2 development as defined in the *Classes of Development Regulations* under *The Manitoba Environment Act* and is therefore subject to assessment and licencing under *The Manitoba Environment Act*. In addition, the overall project (airstrip and connecting road) requires a comprehensive-study level environmental assessment under *The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.

Under the provisions of the *Canada-Manitoba Agreement on Environmental Assessment Cooperation (The Agreement)*, the Parties have agreed that, where both governments have an environmental assessment responsibility for a proposed project, a co-operative environmental assessment will be undertaken. Accordingly, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), the Federal responsible authority for the project, undertook a comprehensive level study of the project. During October, 2001, INAC submitted its Comprehensive Study Report to the Minister of Environment and to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency for a decision.

Concurrently, on October 2, 2001, the Manitoba Department of Transportation and Government Services, the proponent of the project, filed a Proposal, with a supporting Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), for review and licencing of the connecting road component of the project under *The Manitoba Environment Act*.

In accordance with *The Agreement*, Manitoba Conservation placed a joint Canada-Manitoba public consultation notice to advise the public of the receipt and availability of the EIS and Comprehensive Study Report for review and comment. The Public Consultation Notice read as follows:

“Manitoba Transportation and Government Services (MTGS) has submitted a proposal to construct an airstrip and a 28-km all-weather road connection between St. Theresa Point First Nation and Wasagamack First Nation, located on the western shore of Island Lake, 500 km north of Winnipeg. The project would also include a 1524-metre gravel runway with apron and taxiway, airport terminal building, airport equipment storage building and associated services such as fuel storage, as well as the decommissioning of existing airstrip facilities on St. Mary’s Island. The connecting road component of this project requires approval and licensing under the *Manitoba Environment Act*. The complete project is subject to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.”

The Public Consultation Notice was placed in the following newspapers:

The Winnipeg Free Press – Saturday, October 27, 2001;
The Thompson Nickel Belt News – Monday, October 29, 2001;
The Weetamah – First week of November; and
The Grass Roots – Second week of November.

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The EIS and Comprehensive Study Report were filed at the public registries located at the Winnipeg Conservation and Environment Library, the Manitoba Eco-Network, the Centennial Public Library and the Thompson Public Library. Copies of the Public Consultation Notice and the documents were also made available at the St. Theresa Point First Nation Band Office and the Wasagamack First Nation Band Office. It was also distributed to the "Transportation" Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members for comment.

Comments on the CSR were to be directed to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency in Ottawa. Comments on the EIS were to be submitted to Manitoba Conservation. All comments were requested by December 5, 2001.

PUBLIC RESPONSE

No public response was received by CEAA or by Manitoba Conservation as a result of the Public Consultation Notice.

COMMENTS FROM THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Canadian Environmental Assessment and Review Agency (CEAA) - Note that both Environment Canada and Fisheries and Oceans have provided specialist advice during the environmental assessment and therefore further comments from federal departments will not be provided on the proposal as filed under *The Manitoba Environment Act*. The Federal Minister of Environment will consider the Comprehensive Study Report prepared by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and any comments received before a final decision on the project is made.

Conservation (Sustainable Resource Management Branch) - Request that harvested timber be stockpiled in an area off the ROW and Airstrip in case a plan for the use of the timber is not in place when the timber is harvested or sale of the timber proves to be not economically unfeasible.

Appropriate Work Permits are required from Manitoba Conservation.

Disposition: Comments can be accommodated as conditions of the Licence.

Intergovernmental Affairs - No concerns.

Industry, Trade and Mines - No concerns.

Historic Resources Branch - No concerns.

PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing is not recommended for this project on the basis that no comments or concerns were received in response to the Environment Act advertisement of the Proposal.

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:

The comments received from the technical review of the Proposal can be accommodated as conditions of licencing. It is therefore recommended that the project be licenced pursuant to the Environment Act in accordance with the terms and conditions described in the attached draft Environment Act Licence.

PREPARED BY:

Bryan Blunt
Environmental Approvals
Environmental Land Use Approvals
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Telephone: (204) 945-7085
Fax: (204) 945-5229
E-mail: bblunt@gov.mb.ca