



September 18, 2026

Ellen Torng
9 Bompas Street, Box 2570
Inuvik, NT, X0E 0T0

Via email: partnerships@nihtatgwichin.ca
consultations@nihtatgwichin.ca

Mackenzie Valley Highway Environmental Assessment

Re: Nihtat Technical Team request for a separate technical re-scoping session

Dear Ms. Torng,

Thank you for your September 7, 2026 [letter](#) requesting a meeting between the Nihtat Technical Team and Mackenzie Valley Review Board (Review Board) staff. We appreciate Nihtat Gwich'in Council's continued engagement in the Mackenzie Valley Highway environmental assessment and your commitment to participating constructively in the re-scoping process.

The Review Board recognizes the scheduling challenges described in your letter and appreciates your efforts to ensure that Nihtat-specific environmental, social, cultural, and economic considerations are appropriately reflected in the revised Terms of Reference.

Transparency, procedural fairness, and meaningful participation are fundamental principles of the Review Board's environmental assessment process. As a result, discussions about the potential impacts of a development and the scope of issues to be considered in an environmental assessment are therefore conducted through public processes that are open to all interested parties. The upcoming technical re-scoping session is intended to provide that opportunity.

Review Board staff would be pleased to meet with the Nihtat Technical Team to discuss environmental assessment procedures, process requirements, or scheduling matters. In that regard, we appreciated the opportunity to meet with Nihtat representatives on September 18, 2026 to discuss the matters raised in your letter and the upcoming re-scoping process. However, to maintain an open and transparent process, the Review Board is unable to hold separate discussions with individual parties regarding substantive input on the revised Terms of Reference. We encourage the Nihtat Technical Team to bring any such perspectives forward through the public re-scoping process, either during the technical session or through written submissions, where they can be considered alongside the views of other participants.



We would also like to clarify the respective roles of the organizations involved in this assessment process. The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board is an independent co-management institution established under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and operates separately from the Government of the Northwest Territories and federal departments. While the Review Board works closely with proponents, regulators, governments, Indigenous governments and organizations throughout an environmental assessment, it does not represent any party's interests and does not make decisions on behalf of governments. The Review Board's role is to administer a fair, impartial, and transparent environmental assessment process and conducts its own engagement and statutory consultation throughout the environmental assessment process. Procedural decisions regarding the conduct of the environmental assessment are made independently by the Review Board in accordance with its legislated mandate.

Crown Consultation obligations rest with the Crown, while project-specific engagement responsibilities are generally carried out by the project proponent. We understand that several of the concerns raised in your letter relate to Consultation, engagement, and government decision-making processes that fall outside the Review Board's mandate. Addressing those concerns, including requests for discussions with individual Indigenous governments regarding consultation and engagement matters, is the responsibility of the appropriate Crown governments and, where applicable, the project developer. The Review Board suggests further follow-up directly with Nihtat Gwich'in Council on these matters by the responsible Government organizations.

We welcome the Nihtat Gwich'in Council and its Technical Team's continued participation in the re-scoping process, including its attendance at the upcoming technical re-scoping session and encourage further written submissions on the revised scope and terms of reference for the the Review Board to consider. Review Board staff would be pleased to arrange future meetings to discuss process-related matters and participation opportunities.

Thank you again for your letter. We look forward to your continued participation in this process. If you have questions, please contact Ellie Adjun (780-660-2263 or eadjun@reviewboard.ca) or Catherine Fairbairn (867-766-7054 or cfairbairn@reviewboard.ca).

On behalf of the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board,

Mark Cliffe-Phillips
Executive Director

c. Distribution List

President Kelly McLeod
Nihtat Gwich'in Council

Vice-president Chris Smith
Nihtat Gwich'in Council

Chair Willard Hagen
Nihtat Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council

Coordinator Stephanie Clark
Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council

Charlie Palmer
Legacy Environmental

Manager of MVH Affairs Patricia Coyne
GNWT Infrastructure

A/ Projects Director Shannon Allerston
Northern Project Management Office

Manager of Project Assessment Alison Heslep
GNWT Environment and Climate Change