

ᑕehdzo Got'Inę Gots'ę Nákedı/ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (SRRB)



Information Requests, Mackenzie Valley Highway Environmental Assessment

Information Requests Surrounding Critical Wildlife Values: Harvest, Fish, and Habitat

Introduction to Our Organization and Perspective:

The ᑕehdzo Got'Inę Gots'ę Nákedı (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board; SRRB) was established as a result of Chapter 13, Wildlife Harvesting and Management, in the Sahtú Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (SDMCLCA, 1993). The SRRB works with the ᑕehdzo Got'Inę (Renewable Resource Councils; RRCs) of the Sahtu region to manage wildlife populations and habitat, and to safeguard Indigenous rights surrounding harvest.

For the proposed Mackenzie Valley Highway project, the SRRB has a role to play in both supporting the RRCs in engaging with the Environmental Assessment process, and as a party with a mandate to engage with any development process that could negatively impact wildlife, wildlife habitat, or harvesting. While many other parties will be speaking to Indigenous rights surrounding land tenure, social, and economic impacts, the SRRB will focus on sections of the DAR relating to their mandate areas.

Overarching Questions:

The contents of the Developer's Assessment Report (DAR) describe plans to further develop or complete various elements of the development plan, such as the Wildlife Management and Monitoring Plan (WMMP), in partnership with Sahtu communities and Indigenous Organizations.

1. Will the GNWT commit to funding and sharing decision-making processes and authority with communities (Including Indigenous Governments, Land Corporations, Renewable Resource Councils/Boards, and other relevant Indigenous Organizations) in the Mackenzie Valley for the design, administration, and implementation of Mackenzie Valley Highway management and monitoring programs, including the WMMP and Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Plan (FFHHP), adaptive management processes, and working groups to manage, analyze, and respond to Project predictions and potential effects on valued Indigenous components?

2. Will the GNWT commit to adequately funding and working with the RRCs and indigenous Government Lands entities in partnership to update baseline data for fish and wildlife species within the Project corridor at least a year prior to the beginning of construction?

Fish Harvest:

In Section 17.0 of the DAR, Assessment of Potential Effects on Fish and Fish Habitat, the text notes an anticipated adverse effect to large-bodied fishes as a result of increased harvest.

1. Does the Proponent currently have an estimate of total fish harvest from all sectors?
2. Can the Proponent elaborate on which sector(s) (Indigenous, subsistence, recreational) they anticipate this additional harvest coming from? The text in the DAR seems to imply the increase is expected in the recreational sector, using Arctic Grayling as an example.

Fish and Fish Habitat

Volume 3 (11), Appendix 17A, the Fish and Fish Habitat Technical Data Report. This question focuses on whether the information on hand will be enough to assess impacts down the road. In section 4.2, at the bottom of the first page, the text notes that no contaminant studies have been conducted for the Project area.

1. Does the Proponent assume a baseline contaminant level of 0, plan to gather contaminant data or TK prior to construction, or is there a proxy they intend to use to evaluate change?
2. Section 17.4.3.1: water withdrawals. Are best practices for water withdrawals adjusted during drought conditions? Is it known if/which areas of the proposed construction are currently impacted by the drought conditions?
3. Is it correct that erosion and sediment control options like sediment fences are only to be used during the construction phase? Has the Proponent considered the potential impact to streams of ongoing sediment loading from dust beyond the construction period?
4. For DFO: In considering the length of the road being discussed and the number of culverts being planned, does DFO believe that the mitigation measures proposed in section 17.4.4.3 will be sufficient to maintain fish passage/movement in the northern climate?