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August 10, 2026

File: MV2026X0005

Mark Cliffe-Phillips
Mackenzie Valley Review Board
200 Scotia Centre
Box 938, 5102-50th Avenue
Yellowknife NT X1A 2N7

Sent by email

Dear Mark Cliffe-Phillips,

Re: Northern Transportation Route Initiative Project – Notice of Preliminary Screening Determination –Application for Land Use Permit – Miscellaneous – Bell Rock, NT

The Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board (Board) met on August 6, 2026, and considered the Application Package from Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) for Land Use Permit (Permit) MV2026X0005 for the Northern Transportation Route Initiative Project (Project) in accordance with the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (MVRMA).

The Board conducted a preliminary screening based on the public record for the proceeding. Based on the evidence provided, the Board is satisfied the screening has been completed according to section 125 of the MVRMA and has decided **not to refer** the Project to environmental assessment. The Board's Preliminary Screening Determination and Reasons for Decision, as required by section 121 of the MVRMA, is attached.

If the Board does not receive notice of referral to environmental assessment, it can proceed with issuance of Permit MV2026X0005 on **Friday, August 21, 2026**.

The Board and staff look forward to continued communications throughout the pause period. Please contact Kathy Racher via [email](#) or at (867) 766-7457 with any questions or concerns regarding this letter.

Yours sincerely,

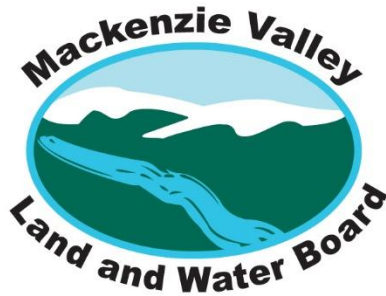
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tanya Macintosh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tanya" and last name "Macintosh" clearly legible.

Tanya Macintosh

Chair, Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board

BCC'd to: Akaticho Distribution List
Paul McClelland – Atomic Energy of Canada
Trevor Balsdon – Project Lead, Canadian Nuclear Laboratories
Emily Finstad – Regulatory Consultant, WSP

Attached: Preliminary Screening Determination and Reasons for Decision



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Preliminary Screening Determination and Reasons for Decision

Land Use Permit Application	
File Number	MV2026X0005
Company	Atomic Energy of Canada Limited
Project	Northern Transportation Route Initiative Project
Location	Bell Rock, NT
Activity	Miscellaneous
Date of Decision	August 6, 2026

1.0 Decision

In accordance with subsection 124(1) of the [Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act](#) (MVRMA), the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board (MVLWB or Board) met on August 6, 2026, to make a preliminary screening determination on the Application from Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) (Applicant) for Land Use Permit MV2026X0005 (Permit) for the Northern Transportation Route Initiative Project (Project).

The Board has decided not to refer the proposed Project to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (the Review Board) for Environmental Assessment because, based on the evidence, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed Project will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment or be a cause of public concern.

The Board's determination, including reasons for its decision, is detailed in sections [3.0](#) and [4.0](#).

2.0 List of Defined Terms and Acronyms

Applicant	Atomic Energy of Canada Limited
Application	The complete application package submitted by the Applicant for Land Use Permit MV2026X0005
GNWT	Government of the Northwest Territories
GNWT-ECC	Government of the Northwest Territories – Environment and Climate Change
Inspector	An Inspector designated under subsection 84(1) of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act
LWBs	Land and Water Boards of the Mackenzie Valley
MVLWB or Board	Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board
MVRMA	Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act
Minister	Minister of the Government of the Northwest Territories – Environment and Climate Change
NTR	Northern Transportation Route
ORS	Online Review System (www.new.onlinereviewssystem.ca)
Party	As per the LWB Rules of Procedure , an applicant, a person, or an organization participating in the regulatory proceeding for the Application.
Permit	Land Use Permit MV2026X0005
Project	Northern Transportation Route Initiative Project, which is the proposed development (as defined in Part 5 of the MVRMA). ¹
Review Board	Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
Standard Permit Conditions	LWB Standard Land Use Permit Conditions Template

3.0 Background and Scope of Screening

On February 16, 2026, the Applicant submitted the Application, which was deemed incomplete on February 18, 2026. On June 2, 2026, an updated application was received, and on June 10, 2026, the Application was deemed complete and circulated to the Distribution List for public review on the Online Review System.

AECL began engagement before submitting the Application in October 2025 and continued into May 2026.

AECL noted that it engaged with the following Parties:

- Akaitcho Screening Committee
- Deninu Kųé First Nation
- Fort Resolution Métis Government
- Fort Smith Métis Council
- Northwest Territory Métis Nation
- Salt River First Nation
- Town of Fort Smith
- Tthebatthie Denesųliné Nation (Smith’s Landing)

¹ “development” is defined in Part 5 of the [MVRMA](#) as:

“any undertaking, or any part or extension of an undertaking, that is carried out on land or water and includes an acquisition of lands pursuant to the *Historic Sites and Monuments Act* and measures carried out by a department or agency of government leading to the establishment of a park subject to the *Canada National Parks Act* or the establishment of a park under a territorial law.”

- K'atlodeeche First Nation
- Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation
- Yellowknives Dene First Nation
- West Point First Nation

The Northern Transportation Route Initiative Project is a project to identify and clean up old uranium ore spill sites along the former Northern Transportation Route (NTR). The NTR is a 2,000 km water and portage route that runs from Port Radium, NT, to Fort McMurray, AB. In the early 1990s, higher-than-normal radiation levels were found at some transfer points along the route. These levels are believed to be from small spills that occurred when uranium ore was moved and handled. From 2010 to 2020, AECL spoke with local Indigenous governments, organizations, and rights holders. They indicated that leaving the material in place and monitoring it over the long term was not acceptable. The preferred approach is to remove the affected soil and dispose of it at an approved landfill.

In accordance with paragraph 125(1)(a) of the [MVRMA](#), the Board must conduct a preliminary screening of the proposed Project to determine and report to the Review Board whether, in its opinion, the proposed Project might have a significant adverse impact on the environment or might be a cause of public concern. The details of the Board's analysis are set out in section [4.0](#) below.

3.1 Scope of Screening

The objectives of the Project are to remove shallow soils containing residual uranium ore and associated soil uranium concentrations exceeding 23 mg/kg. According to the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment Canadian Soil Quality Guidelines, land with uranium soil concentrations less than 23 mg/kg is suitable for any land use, including agricultural, residential, parkland, commercial, and industrial. Additionally, uranium concentrations below 23 mg/kg exhibit no adverse impacts on human and environmental health. Soil will be considered remediated when concentrations of uranium are equal to or below 23 mg/kg.

Equipment and resources for the Project are anticipated to be mobilized from Fort Smith. Equipment required would include:

- 2 bulldozers
- 2 excavators
- 2 loaders or dump trucks
- 2 skid steers (or similar equipment)
- 2 off-road vehicles with trailers or sleds
- 2 water pumps

Pre-fieldwork and post-fieldwork gamma radiation surveys will be completed on all equipment. The cleaning of equipment used on the Project will require the removal of any loose dirt onsite followed by a gamma radiation survey to ensure gamma radiation readings fall within pre-fieldwork levels before equipment can leave the Project area.

3.2 Public Record and Regulatory Proceeding

To assist the Board in its preliminary screening determination for the Project, the Board distributed the Application for public review on June 10, 2026, inviting reviewers to provide comments and recommendations on the Application and the preliminary screening (e.g., on impacts and mitigation measures) using the Online Review System. On June 24, 2026, the review period was extended in response to AECL submitting its Closure and Reclamation Plan (CRP) and requesting that it be added to the review. The comment deadline was extended from June 30, 2026, to July 21, 2026, and the response deadline was extended from July 10, 2026, to July 28, 2026. The Board received comments and recommendations from the following Parties (attached):

- North Slave Métis Alliance;
- West Point First Nation;
- Yellowknives Dene First Nation;
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada;
- Government of the Northwest Territories – Education, Culture and Employment – Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre; and
- Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

Board staff also submitted comments and questions for the purposes of clarification.

The Board is satisfied that a reasonable period of notice was given to affected communities and First Nations, as required by subsection 63(2) of the [MVRMA](#).

Pursuant to Schedule 4.1 of the [Northwest Territory Métis Nation \(NWTMN\) Interim Measures Agreement](#), the Board determined that written notice was given to the NWTMN and that a reasonable period of time was allowed for the NWTMN to make representations with respect to the Application.

Pursuant to subsection 1.6, paragraphs (a) and (b), of the [Akaitcho Territory Dene First Nations \(ATDFN\) Interim Measures Agreement](#), the Board determined that written notice was given to the ATDFN and that a reasonable period of time was allowed for the ATDFN to make representations with respect to the Application.

The Board is also satisfied that notice of the Application was provided to the Ghotelnene K’odtjneh Dene (formerly Manitoba Denesuline) and that a reasonable period of time was provided for the Ghotelnene K’odtjneh Dene to make representations to the Board in accordance with section 63 of the [MVRMA](#).

4.0 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigations

Table 1 below summarizes:

- the potential impacts of the proposed Project;
- the concerns that were identified during the regulatory proceeding and how the Applicant addressed those concerns;

- the proposed and potential mitigations for the potential impacts; and
- the Board's analysis of the potential impacts and proposed mitigations.

Table 1: Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigations for the Proposed Project

Potential Impact	Activity	Proposed Mitigations <i>Description of measures to reduce potential impacts, including consideration of cumulative impacts and climate change.</i>	Board Analysis and Determination
Soil Contamination	Remediation Activities	• The Applicant proposed the following mitigations in the Application: ○ The Spill Contingency Plan will be followed, and any fuel spills will be promptly cleaned. ○ At completion of the Project, soils will be tested through analytical means to ensure uranium concentrations are equal to or below 23 mg/kg and radiological activity of U-238 Series. • The Board has standard permit conditions that are typically used to mitigate the identified potential impacts. These standard conditions include: ○ REPAIR LEAKS ○ SECONDARY CONTAINMENT – REFUELING ○ FUEL CONTAINMENT ○ SPILL CONTINGENCY PLAN ○ SPILL RESPONSE ○ DRIP TRAYS ○ CLEAN UP SPILLS ○ REPORT SPILLS	Based on the described mitigations, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed activities will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and will not be a cause of public concern.
Soil Compaction and Destabilization/ Erosion	Remediation Activities	• The Applicant proposed the following mitigations in the Application: ○ Soil compaction, destabilization, and erosion may occur from site travel, excavation, and equipment use. Previously disturbed areas will be used to the extent possible to prevent destabilization and erosion, and standard land use permit conditions include procedures to avoid soil erosion and compaction (e.g., Repair Erosion). The Erosion and Sedimentation Management Plan will be implemented. • The Board has standard permit conditions that are typically used to mitigate the identified potential impacts. These standard conditions include:	Based on the described mitigations, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed activities will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and will not be a cause of public concern.

Potential Impact	Activity	Proposed Mitigations <i>Description of measures to reduce potential impacts, including consideration of cumulative impacts and climate change.</i>	Board Analysis and Determination
		○ SUSPEND OVERLAND TRAVEL ○ CLOSURE AND RECLAMATION PLAN ○ PROGRESSIVE RECLAMATION ○ EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION MANAGEMENT PLAN ○ REPAIR EROSION ○ PROGRESSIVE EROSION CONTROL ○ PREVENTION OF RUTTING ○ EXCAVATION SETBACK	
Changes in Water Quality	Equipment	• The Applicant proposed the following mitigations in the Application: ○ Fuel leaks from equipment and fuel use may cause changes to water quality. The Spill Contingency Plan will be implemented and followed to reduce the potential for surface water contamination. AECL will also implement the Erosion and Sedimentation Management Plan to prevent soil from entering nearby waterbodies and comply with applicable land use permit conditions (e.g., fuel containment, spill response). • The Board has standard permit conditions that are typically used to mitigate the identified potential impacts. These standard conditions include: ○ SPILL CONTINGENCY PLAN ○ SPILL RESPONSE ○ CLEAN UP SPILLS ○ CLOSURE AND RECLAMATION PLAN ○ WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN ○ EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION MANAGEMENT PLAN ○ REPAIR EROSION ○ PROGRESSIVE EROSION CONTROL	Based on the described mitigations, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed activities will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and will not be a cause of public concern.
Changes in Air Quality	Operations	• The Applicant proposed the following mitigations in the Application: ○ Dust generation from soil excavation, stockpiling, and storage may occur. To mitigate dust generation, the Erosion and Sedimentation	Based on the described mitigations, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed activities will not have a significant adverse impact on

Potential Impact	Activity	Proposed Mitigations <i>Description of measures to reduce potential impacts, including consideration of cumulative impacts and climate change.</i>	Board Analysis and Determination
		Management Plan will be implemented, and soil stockpiles will be lined and covered with tarps or 6-mil poly and anchored. Soil handling and disturbance will also be limited by excavating in thin layers. In addition, stockpiled soil will be removed as soon as possible to reduce exposure to weather. Water will also be used during excavation and hauling to minimize dust generation.	the environment and will not be a cause of public concern.
Increased Greenhouse Gases	Operations	- The Applicant proposed the following mitigations in the Application: - Greenhouse gas emissions will also be produced by the Project from fuel and equipment use. The chosen contractor will use energy-efficient equipment and implement emissions-reduction strategies (e.g., no idling) where possible.	Based on the described mitigations, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed activities will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and will not be a cause of public concern.
Direct Loss of Vegetation	Remediation Activities	- The Applicant proposed the following mitigations in the Application: - Vegetation may be affected by site travel and remediation activities. Tree clearing may also be required during the Project. Disturbance of existing vegetation will be mitigated by limiting the Project footprint, using previously disturbed land for Project activities, and establishing temporary soil storage areas. - The Board has standard permit conditions that are typically used to mitigate the identified potential impacts. These standard conditions include: - HABITAT DAMAGE	Based on the described mitigations, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed activities will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and will not be a cause of public concern.
Introduction of non-native species	Equipment	- The Applicant proposed the following mitigations in the Application: - Invasive species may be introduced by equipment. All earth-moving or tracked equipment will be cleaned before mobilization to the site. - The Board has standard permit conditions that are typically used to mitigate the identified potential impacts. These standard conditions include: - HABITAT DAMAGE	Based on the described mitigations, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed activities will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and will not be a cause of public concern.
Compaction of vegetation	Remediation Activities	The Applicant proposed the following mitigations in the Application:	Based on the described mitigations, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed activities

Potential Impact	Activity	Proposed Mitigations <i>Description of measures to reduce potential impacts, including consideration of cumulative impacts and climate change.</i>	Board Analysis and Determination
		○ Vegetation may be affected by site travel and remediation activities. Tree clearing may also be required during the Project. Disturbance of existing vegetation will be mitigated by limiting the Project footprint, using previously disturbed land for Project activities, and establishing temporary soil storage areas. • The Board has standard permit conditions that are typically used to mitigate the identified potential impacts. These standard conditions include: ○ HABITAT DAMAGE	will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and will not be a cause of public concern.
Increased Human Health Hazard and Risk	Pre-remediation site conditions	• The Applicant proposed the following mitigations in the Application: ○ As described in the Project Description, an assessment of the radiation dose at all NTR sites concluded that the residual uranium ore is not considered to present significant health or ecological risks and presents very low radiological exposure risks. Nonetheless, health and safety are high priorities for all AECL projects, and CNSC's regulations on radiation exposure will be followed throughout the Project. In addition, to minimize any exposure to radiation and radon gas, the chosen contractor will implement ALARA (As Low As Reasonably Achievable) principles to guide radiation exposure mitigation for workers, complete radiation awareness training, minimize time spent near uranium materials, implement periodic gamma radiation dose monitoring, ensure appropriate protective equipment (e.g., gloves, respiratory protection) is worn, clean all equipment at the end of remediation, and maintain covered waste storage areas. • The Board has standard permit conditions that are typically used to mitigate the identified potential impacts. These standard conditions include: ○ ENGAGEMENT PLAN	Based on the described mitigations, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed activities will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and will not be a cause of public concern.

Potential Impact	Activity	Proposed Mitigations <i>Description of measures to reduce potential impacts, including consideration of cumulative impacts and climate change.</i>	Board Analysis and Determination
Economic opportunities	Operations	• The Applicant proposed the following mitigations in the Application: ○ The Project will provide local opportunities for light and heavy equipment operators and general labourers. There may also be local education or job training opportunities for youth interested in remediation and environmental sciences. • The Board has standard permit conditions that are typically used to mitigate the identified potential impacts. These standard conditions include: ○ ENGAGEMENT PLAN	Based on the described mitigations, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed activities will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and will not be a cause of public concern.
Changes to the use of the area by other non-Indigenous people	Remediation Activities	• The Applicant proposed the following mitigations in the Application: ○ Remediation is intended to make the area safer for people and wildlife and is expected to improve site safety. • The Board has standard permit conditions that are typically used to mitigate the identified potential impacts. These standard conditions include: ○ ENGAGEMENT PLAN	Based on the described mitigations, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed activities will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and will not be a cause of public concern.

4.1 Consideration of Potential Impacts

Based on the potential impacts and proposed mitigations identified above in Table 1, the Board considered whether the Project might have a significant adverse impact on the environment. In general, impacts of the Project on the environment can be mitigated through the use of standard permit conditions and/or project-specific conditions established by the Board as per the LWB [Standard Process for Creating New Conditions](#). These conditions may include requirements for management and monitoring plans that provide detailed information regarding the implementation of mitigation measures and the evaluation of their effectiveness.

A draft Permit was circulated for review during the regulatory proceeding, and all Parties were given the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations on the draft conditions. In finalizing the conditions, the Board will consider all evidence provided through the regulatory proceeding.

4.2 Consideration of Public Concern

In addition to considering the potential impacts of the Project, the Board considered whether the Project might be a cause of public concern.

Based on the evidence provided during the regulatory proceeding, the Board did not identify any comments or issues that indicate that the Project is a cause of public concern.

5.0 Conclusion

The Board has reviewed all evidence received during the regulatory process with respect to the Preliminary Screening of the proposed Project. Based on the evidence, it is the Board's opinion that the proposed Project will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment or be a cause of public concern, as set out in paragraph 125(1)(a) of the [MVRMA](#). The Board has therefore decided not to refer the proposed Project to Environmental Assessment. If the Board does not receive a notice of referral to environmental assessment by Thursday, August 20, 2026, the Board can issue the Permit on Friday, August 21, 2026.

SIGNATURE



Tanya MacIntosh, Chair
Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board

August 10, 2026

Date