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Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development Canada

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Review of 2016-2017 Annual Report Giant Mine Remediation Project

The Giant Mine Oversight Board (GMOB) has reviewed the 2016-2017 Annual Report of the Giant Mine Remediation Project (GMRP) entitled “Remediating the Mine” dated October, 2017.

The document was reviewed by GMOB against the requirements set out in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 of the Giant Mine Remediation Project Environmental Agreement (the Agreement). Additionally, we provided some comments on the content/format of the document that could, in our opinion, improve the document’s utility but are not strictly tied to the requirements in the Agreement. It is important to note that our review is focussed on the report itself and does not include an assessment of the overall progress of the Project.

Compliance with Sections 5.1 and 5.2 of the Agreement

The GMRP provides, on pages 2-4 of the Annual Report, its own evaluation of how each of the requirements of Section 5.2 of the Agreement have been addressed. While most of the requirements were thoroughly addressed, the GMRP itself noted that several items, including a summary of changes to environmental programs/plans, an analysis of environmental trends, a summary of public concerns, and a summary of planned expenditures, were not completely addressed in the 2016-17 Annual Report but would be addressed in future reports. The GMRP also acknowledges that the requirement for a plain-language summary of the report (as per Section 5.2(o) of the Agreement) would be addressed in a separate submission. GMOB notes that no date was given for the submission of the plain-language summary; at the time of this letter, no such summary has been provided.

GMOB also notes that the report was submitted on October 30, 2017 rather than on October 1st as stipulated in the Agreement. GMOB was given advance notice of the late report submission

date and offered a draft version of the report on October 1; GMOB declined the latter offer, wishing only to review a final version.

Responses to GMOB's Recommendations on the 2015-2016 GMRP Annual Report

GMOB made several recommendations on the GMRP 2015-2016 Annual Report last year. In addition to pointing out areas where we didn't think the report completely complied with Section 5.2 of the Agreement, GMOB attempted to provide recommendations that, in our opinion, would improve the utility of the document as a communication and planning tool both for GMOB and the general public. We note that the GMRP has listed the ways in which it attempted to address GMOB's recommendations on pages 5-10 of the 2016-2017 Annual Report; however, we felt that many of our recommendations were not incorporated in a meaningful way this year. Importantly, GMOB still did not find the report helpful in assessing the full status of the Project as it moves towards the remediation.

Rather than pursue those recommendations again within the context of the GMRP Annual Report, or make an extensive list of new ones, GMOB has reconsidered how best to obtain the information we are seeking. At the November 2017 Semi-Annual Meeting, the GMRP Team committed to provide GMOB with some key items including a high level five-year internal performance measurement document including a project schedule (with highlighted milestones), a budget breakdown, a risk mitigation plan, and an executive level summary. It is our understanding that these items will be provided to GMOB as soon as available; GMOB expects to receive these items under separate cover but understand that they may become part of the GMRP Annual Reports in future.

At the November 2017 Semi Annual Meeting with the Parties to the Agreement, GMOB specifically asked the Parties whether they had used last year's GMRP Annual Report or how that report fit in generally to the other ways that the GMRP communicates to them. There was little response indicating that, currently at least, the role and utility of the annual report is not clear. Given that it comes out about 7 months after the end of the reporting period, it could be that it is best viewed as a kind of reference document that provides a substantive record and summary of what happened in any given past year. In contrast, other GMRP engagement methods like, for example, its newsletters or the Working Group meetings may be better ways to ensure timely and ongoing two-way communications with the Parties and the public. GMOB believes that more discussions to resolve this issue are needed prior to the release of the 2017-2018 Annual Report.

Distribution of the GMRP Annual Report

As discussed at the November 2017 Semi Annual Meetings, there has been some confusion about who has the responsibility to distribute the report to the public. Our understanding, based on these recent discussions, is that the GMRP Team will distribute the final report to the Parties directly and at the same time as it is sent to GMOB. It is also our understanding that it is the GMRP's responsibility to make the report available to the public as per Section 5.1 of the

Agreement. When GMOB has completed its compliance review of the document, we will post the review and the report to our website.

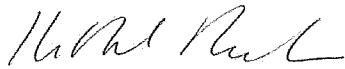
Conclusion

The GMRP Annual Report is obviously a large undertaking which requires the coordination and summary of the many aspects of this complicated project; as a result, there is great deal of useful information in this report as is. Nonetheless, GMOB would like to continue exploring the best format/content of the GMRP Annual Report with the Project Team and the Parties to ensure it fulfills the role intended by those that negotiated the Agreement. As well, GMOB asks that the GMRP to make best efforts to fully comply with the requirements outlined in Section 5.2 of the Agreement in its subsequent annual reports and looks forward to the plain language summary still outstanding for the 2016-2017 Annual Report.

In closing, we would like to thank the Project Team for your continued responsiveness to our requests and queries over the past year.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kathy Racher

Chair, Giant Mine Oversight Board

cc. Parties to the Environmental Agreement