

MEMORANDUM

TO: Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

FROM: Mark Vendrig, Consult5, on behalf of Slate Falls Nation

SUBJECT: Federal technical comments do not support IAAC's conclusion of non-significant effects for the Springpole Gold Project

DATE: June 16, 2026

1. Purpose

This memorandum responds to the federal technical comments submitted by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Natural Resources Canada, and Health Canada on IAAC's Draft Environmental Assessment Report (the "Draft EA Report") and Draft Potential Conditions for the Springpole Gold Project.

The purpose is to assess whether IAAC can reasonably rely on those federal comments as support for its conclusion that the Project is not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects.

2. Summary Finding

IAAC cannot reasonably rely on the federal technical memoranda as a complete defence of its non-significance conclusions. The federal comments are mandate-limited, qualified, and in several key areas identify unresolved uncertainty rather than resolving it.

In particular:

- DFO's broad statement that IAAC has accurately and adequately characterized fish and fish habitat effects is inconsistent with unresolved uncertainty acknowledged in the Draft EA Report and with ECCC's and MECP's technical comments on water-taking, seepage, and fish habitat conditions.
- ECCC's comments directly undermine confidence in IAAC's conclusions by identifying uncertainty in water-taking rates, fish habitat effects, seepage-face effects, accidents and malfunctions, effects on federal lands, and Boreal Caribou population impacts. In several instances, ECCC expressly states that IAAC's characterization does not fully reflect ECCC's approved expert information and knowledge.
- NRCan's "no red flag" statement is limited to groundwater quantity and preliminary follow-up and monitoring frameworks. It does not resolve groundwater quality, seepage pathways, contaminant loading, or receiving-environment risk identified by MECP reviewers.
- Health Canada identifies material gaps in IAAC's health assessment, including uncertainty about country foods due to a lack of community-specific consumption data, reliance on inaccurate "thresholds" purportedly set by Health Canada, the need for monitoring for methylmercury and NO₂, and uncertainty regarding follow-up endpoints and Indigenous health pathways.

- Multiple federal agencies identify unresolved uncertainty regarding treatment performance, pit lake behaviour, groundwater transport pathways, and the adequacy of proposed monitoring and adaptive management frameworks.

Taken together, the federal and provincial technical comments do not support IAAC's significance conclusions. Rather, they demonstrate that key uncertainties, unresolved pathways, incomplete information, and material technical limitations remain outstanding and likely have material impacts on the significance determination.

3. IAAC's Treatment of Technical Advice

In the Draft EA Report, IAAC indicates it considered expert advice from federal authorities, including Environment and Climate Change Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Health Canada, Indigenous Services Canada (including the First Nations and Indigenous Health Branch), Natural Resources Canada, and Transport Canada in assessing the Project's effects.

The issue identified in this memorandum is not that federal authorities failed to identify concerns. Rather, the issue is that the Draft EA Report repeatedly narrows, selectively summarizes, or decontextualizes expert advice, thereby understating unresolved uncertainty and overestimating the degree of expert support for IAAC's conclusions.

In multiple instances, IAAC relies on broad or positive summary statements while omitting the limitations, mandate boundaries, qualifications, and unresolved technical concerns contained within the same agency submissions. The result is a recurring pattern in which:

- Agencies identify uncertainty, missing information, modelling limitations, unresolved pathways, or future study requirements;
- IAAC reframes those issues as matters to be addressed through future permitting, monitoring, adaptive management, or follow-up; and
- IAAC nevertheless concludes that effects are not likely significant, without meaningfully incorporating the full scope of the Agencies' comments or acknowledging the real potential that those unresolved uncertainties or other issues materially affect IAAC's significance determinations.

This distinction is important. A mandate-limited statement such as "no red flag," "adequately characterized," or "generally satisfied" cannot reasonably be interpreted as a broad endorsement of non-significance where the same technical record identifies unresolved uncertainty regarding groundwater pathways, fish habitat recovery, contaminant loading, methylmercury formation, treatment performance, cumulative effects, or Indigenous health impacts.

Administrative decision-making requires that conclusions remain rationally connected to the evidentiary record. Where significant uncertainty remains unresolved, particularly regarding long-term environmental performance, fish and fish habitat recovery, groundwater contaminant transport, Indigenous health pathways, or closure outcomes, the uncertainty itself must be transparently reflected in the significance determination. It is not sufficient, illogical, and irrational to defer unresolved issues to future monitoring or permitting while simultaneously concluding that effects are not significant.

The issue is a repeated pattern across multiple technical disciplines and agencies in which uncertainty and technical limitations are narrowed in the summary narrative of the Draft EA Report and not proportionately carried through to IAAC's conclusions. These examples are summarized in Appendix A. It is also important to note that in several instances, concerns identified by one regulator are independently reinforced by other federal and provincial reviewers, including water-balance uncertainty, seepage-related fish-habitat risk, gaps in air-quality monitoring, and unresolved Indigenous health pathways. Each of these concerns should be meaningfully incorporated into IAAC's conclusions, but instead have been irrationally excluded, minimized, or ignored.

In several instances, the issue extends beyond selective exclusion and into direct inconsistency between IAAC's conclusions and the technical advice before it. The clearest example is IAAC's reliance on purported Health Canada country food "thresholds" to support its human health conclusion, despite Health Canada expressly stating that such thresholds do not exist within the cited guidance. Similar inconsistencies arise in relation to federal lands effects, groundwater uncertainty, seepage-related fish habitat risk, and navigation-related residual effects. These examples are summarized in Appendix B.

The following sections provide examples where the underlying technical comments are materially narrower, more qualified, or more uncertain than the manner in which they are reflected in the Draft EA Report and associated significance conclusions.

4. DFO's Endorsement is Narrow and Qualified

DFO's broad endorsement of the Draft EA Report's characterization of potential environmental effects as it relates to DFO's mandate has several limitations. First, it applies only to DFO's mandate area. Second, it should be read against ECCC's statement that DFO was supportive of additional efforts to address water levels. ECCC states that continued water level monitoring in Springpole Lake throughout the life of the Project was recommended because it would "improve understanding of inflows to Springpole Lake and inform adaptive mitigation measures and help reduce uncertainty," and that "DFO is also supportive of this recommendation." ECCC Comments, Comment ECCC #1, physical page 2.

DFO's statement that IAAC adequately characterized effects, therefore, does not mean the underlying effects are resolved. ECCC's comment shows that DFO was aware of ongoing uncertainty regarding inflows, water levels, and fish habitat conditions. A conclusion of non-significance cannot be supported merely by stating that DFO was consulted, when the technical record shows that DFO-supported monitoring was still needed to reduce uncertainty.

ECCC also notes that the water quantity models did not address "small-scale areas of concern related to fish and fish habitat in local inland waterbodies," and that applying larger-scale models to smaller, more sensitive areas "remains uncertain." ECCC Comments, Comment ECCC #2, physical pages 2 to 3.

This further qualifies DFO's endorsement. If the water quantity modelling cannot be applied to all areas of concern in respect of fish and fish habitat, then IAAC cannot reasonably rely on DFO's general statement to make conclusions about effects on fish and fish habitat.

The Draft EA Report acknowledges substantial uncertainty related to effects on fish and fish habitat effects yet draws conclusions about significance of effects nonetheless. IAAC states that DFO advised there is uncertainty about fish productivity, species composition, and population demographics during

disconnection and after reconnection, with “many unpredictable influences on ecosystem dynamics and no known comparable situations.” IAAC also acknowledges “substantial uncertainty in the time required to reconnect the dewatered area, restore habitat function, and recolonize,” while nevertheless concluding that fish and fish habitat effects are not significant. Draft EA Report, Section 3.2, physical pages 30 to 31. Unfortunately, DFO’s technical memo does not explain how acknowledged uncertainty in a rare Lake Trout system, long-term disconnection of Springpole Lake habitat, uncertain restoration, uncertain recolonization, and reliance on future offsetting can support a finding of non-significance.

As such, it would be unreasonable for IAAC to rely on DFO’s technical comments to support its significance conclusions.

5. ECCC Identifies Material Uncertainty

5.1. Water Taking and Reconnection

ECCC identified multiple reasons why the reflooding and reconnection analysis remains uncertain: the water-taking rate was based on 10 percent of inflows estimated downstream of the relevant basin, the model did not appear to account for cumulative effects of multiyear water-taking, ice formation may reduce available water volume, and limited winter flow measurements reduce confidence in inflow estimates. ECCC then concluded that “substantial uncertainty remains” for surface water quantity, water quality recovery, and fish habitat conditions. ECCC Comments, Comment ECCC #1, physical pages 1 to 2.

IAAC’s Draft EA Report should not present the five-year reconnection period and minimum 18-year disconnection period as reliable planning assumptions without carrying forward ECCC’s qualifications. The uncertainty is not only about duration. It affects lake levels, water quality recovery, and fish habitat conditions.

5.2. Seepage Face Effects

ECCC corrected IAAC’s wording from “predicted changes” to “predicted effects” at the seepage face, noting that the proponent had not substantiated predicted effects of certain metal concentrations where seepage has not fully mixed and where effects to fish health are most likely to occur. This is not merely editorial. IAAC’s wording softens the issue by describing concentration “changes” rather than effects on fish health at the location where dilution has not occurred and acute effects are most likely. ECCC Comments, Comment ECCC #3, physical page 3.

These are not minor editorial comments. They focus on the reliability of IAAC’s effects prediction, mitigation confidence, and significance conclusion.

5.3. Accidents and Malfunctions

ECCC found that IAAC’s treatment of accidents and malfunctions did not fully capture leaks, storage tanks, hazardous substances, and equipment-maintenance-related releases. ECCC specifically recommended adding “leaks” and storage tanks because spills and leaks are not the same, and because tanks could be a major source of potential releases. ECCC Comments, Comments ECCC #4 and #5, physical pages 3 to 5.

This is another example of IAAC narrowing the risk description. By focusing on accidents and spills without fully accounting for leaks, storage tanks, and maintenance-related releases, IAAC does not fully

characterize credible pathways for water-quality effects and as such, underestimates the significance of conclusions related to same.

5.4. Federal Lands

ECCC's federal lands comments are among the clearest examples where IAAC's conclusion is not aligned with the underlying expert review. ECCC states it "could not locate any data" on effects to federal lands, that the proponent did not provide information on potential environmental impacts from the transmission line on Slate Falls Nation's Reserve, that ECCC made repeated requests for this information, and that ECCC was unable to complete its analysis on potential impacts to terrestrial species at risk and migratory birds. ECCC also states it is "uncertain how IAAC has reached a conclusion that the project is not likely to cause significant adverse effects to the environment on federal lands." ECCC Comments, Comment ECCC #8, physical pages 6 to 8.

This materially weakens IAAC's reliance on federal expert review given ECCC does not support IAAC's conclusion. ECCC states that it lacked the information needed to complete its own analysis and questions how IAAC reached a non-significance conclusion.

5.5. Boreal Caribou

ECCC's comments regarding Boreal Caribou provide one of the clearest examples of IAAC narrowing or softening underlying expert advice. ECCC states that the Draft EA Report "has revised ECCC's expert information and knowledge in a manner that makes the Project's impacts appear less severe than the available information indicates" (emphasis added). ECCC further states that under a worst-case scenario, "the combined regional population across the Churchill, Berens and Kinloch ranges could decline to less than 12 percent remaining within 10 years," and recommends that the Draft EA Report clearly state that the Project could accelerate extirpation from the Churchill Range. ECCC Comments, Comment #14, physical pages 16 to 17.

This is not a minor interpretive disagreement. ECCC is expressly stating that IAAC's characterization does not fully reflect ECCC's approved expert information and knowledge. The issue, therefore, extends beyond uncertainty alone to the manner in which expert evidence has been summarized and represented in the Draft EA Report.

6. NRCAN's 'No Red Flag' Statement is Limited in Scope

6.1. Mandate-Limited Groundwater Review

NRCAN states that, "From an NRCAN perspective on groundwater quantity, there is nothing to identify as a 'red flag' issue," and that NRCAN is satisfied with preliminary follow-up, adaptive management, and environmental management frameworks as they pertain to groundwater. NRCAN letter, physical page 1. NRCAN's review focus was potential effects "as they relate to our mandate," and its satisfaction was with preliminary follow-up, adaptive management, and environmental management frameworks "as they pertain to groundwater quantity".

IAAC cannot reasonably treat NRCAN's "no red flag" statement as resolving groundwater-related environmental risk or as contributing to conclusions of non-significance in respect of fish and fish habitat,

the health/socio-economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples, or effects to current use. The statement is limited by mandate and subject matter. It is a narrow statement about groundwater quantity and preliminary frameworks. It is not a conclusion that groundwater quality, seepage chemistry, preferential pathways, contaminant mass loading, nearshore discharge, or receiving-environment effects have been adequately characterized.

6.2. MECP Hydrogeology

NRCan also identified technical inaccuracies and best-practice issues in the Draft EA Report and conditions, including an internally contradictory reference to “non-metal leaching and acid-generating mine rock,” the need to refer to metal leaching before acid rock drainage, and the recommendation that ML/ARD material be backfilled and/or covered rather than only covered. NRCan Table 1, physical page 3.

These comments are important because they show that NRCan’s “generally satisfied” language does not mean the Draft EA Report is technically complete. Even within NRCan’s mandate, the agency identified terminology and mitigation wording that required correction to avoid misleading implications about construction suitability and ML/ARD mitigation practice.

Furthermore, MECP hydrogeology identifies the very issues that NRCan’s narrow “groundwater quantity” statement does not resolve: seepage contaminant mass, preferential groundwater pathways, localized shoreline discharge, groundwater transport, total seepage-related loading to Springpole Lake and Birch Lake, and whether monitoring locations can intercept pathway-specific discharge. MECP Hydrogeology Review, physical pages 2 to 3.

The provincial hydrogeology review demonstrates the problem with relying on NRCan’s limited statement. The unresolved risk is not simply groundwater quantity. It is the contaminant transport through groundwater pathways into receiving waters and whether monitoring and contingency measures can function if preferential pathways are not first characterized.

Accordingly, IAAC should not rely on NRCan’s limited “no red flag” statement as support for a broader conclusion that groundwater-related risk (or other effects) is adequately characterized or non-significant.

7. Health Canada Identifies Material Gaps in IAAC’s Health Assessment

7.1. Indigenous Health Scope

Health Canada identifies missing or inaccurate information in relation to IAAC’s conclusions related to Indigenous health.

Health Canada confirms that Cat Lake First Nation and Lac Seul First Nation identified a key limitation in the proponent’s health assessment: by focusing on biomedical/biophysical pathways, the assessment failed to encapsulate Indigenous health perspectives, including physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. Health Canada Comments, Comment HC-EA-01, physical page 3.

IAAC’s health conclusion is vulnerable because the health assessment is pathway-limited. Health Canada’s comment confirms that the assessment does not incorporate Indigenous health perspectives.

7.2. Air Quality

Health Canada requested that IAAC include a summary of previously submitted project-specific advice, as project-related changes to local air quality could affect the health of Indigenous Peoples conducting traditional land resource use activities on Springpole Lake, Birch Lake, and surrounding lands. Health Canada further recommended monitoring at locations representative of Indigenous land use. Health Canada Comments, Comment HC-EA-02, physical page 3.

This shows that IAAC's health analysis did not adequately carry forward Health Canada's prior advice nor did IAAC meaningfully incorporate Indigenous knowledge and perspectives reflecting locations representative of current use.

7.3. Air Quality Condition Monitoring Gap

Both ECCC and Health Canada identify a direct gap between the Draft EA Report's own findings and the proposed monitoring conditions. IAAC acknowledges that nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations are predicted to exceed the 1-hour Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards during all phases of the Project, yet NO₂ is absent from Draft Condition 5.2.1 monitoring parameters. ECCC recommends that NO₂ be included in the monitoring condition, while Health Canada independently confirms that metals and NO₂ are not identified as monitoring parameters, despite predicted exceedances. ECCC Comment #9, physical pages 11 to 12; Health Canada Comment HC-06, physical page 2.

This is an example where the proposed conditions do not address those Project effects identified in the Draft EA Report. A monitoring framework that omits a contaminant predicted to exceed national standards cannot reasonably be characterized as complete (leaving aside the issue of whether a monitoring framework can be considered to be protective).

7.4. Country Foods

Health Canada states that project-related changes to contaminants in country foods could result in health impacts to Indigenous Peoples and identifies "existing uncertainty in the assessment of country foods based on an absence of community-specific consumption data." Health Canada identifies outstanding consultation with Indigenous communities required to identify country food species for assessment, follow-up monitoring and risk communication. Health Canada comments, Table 1, Comment HC-EA-04, physical page 3.

IAAC's conclusion that the HHRA is conservative and protective cannot stand without qualification, given Health Canada's identification of outstanding advice and uncertainty due to missing community-specific consumption data and outstanding consultation.

7.5. Thresholds

Health Canada states that its Country Foods guidance does not provide contaminant "thresholds" for terrestrial or aquatic country foods, and that IAAC's references to such thresholds are inaccurate. Health Canada Comments, Comment HC-EA-05, physical page 3.

This creates a direct inconsistency in IAAC's reasoning. IAAC relies on "thresholds" that Health Canada says do not exist in the cited guidance. That undermines IAAC's conclusion that predicted country food contaminant increases are below Health Canada thresholds. This issue goes beyond uncertainty alone.

IAAC's health conclusion relies in part on contaminant "thresholds" that Health Canada expressly states are not contained within the cited guidance, creating a direct inconsistency between IAAC's reasoning and the underlying federal expert advice.

7.6. Methylmercury

Health Canada recommends methylmercury monitoring because IAAC identifies risks that discharges could exceed guidelines and risks associated with methylmercury formation, and because Birch Lake already has a fish consumption advisory due to elevated methylmercury. Health Canada also recommends monitoring at locations used by Indigenous groups for traditional purposes. Health Canada Comments, Comment HC-03, physical page 4.

IAAC's health conclusion does not adequately account for methylmercury risk, existing fish consumption advisories, or Indigenous-use locations. These are not minor monitoring details. They are central to whether the Project may affect drinking water, fish and fish consumption, country foods, current use, and Indigenous health.

7.7. Monitoring Endpoints

Health Canada states that it is uncertain what criteria would be used to determine that monitoring is no longer required for surface water and country foods during or after decommissioning, and recommends that specific, measurable endpoints be established before follow-up programs can end. Health Canada Comments, Comment HC-02, physical page 4.

This further demonstrates that IAAC's reliance on follow-up is insufficient as a "mitigation" measure. If the endpoint for monitoring is uncertain, then monitoring cannot be treated as a fully formed mitigation framework supporting non-significance. These comments do not support a firm no-effect or non-significance conclusion for Indigenous health. They show that the health assessment remains dependent on future monitoring, future thresholds, future endpoints, and future updates to the human health risk assessment that are undefined. Collectively, these comments demonstrate that key elements of the human health assessment remain dependent on future refinement rather than presently demonstrated certainty.

8. Cumulative Effect of Uncertainty

The issue is not limited to isolated technical uncertainties considered independently. The Draft EA Report contains unresolved uncertainty across multiple interconnected systems, including fish habitat recovery, groundwater contaminant transport, treatment performance, methylmercury formation, cumulative effects, and long-term closure performance. The combined effect of these unresolved uncertainties and direct contradictions in IAAC's Draft EA Report materially erodes confidence in IAAC's conclusions that Project effects are not likely to be significant.

IAAC treats these uncertainties individually, despite the fact that they interact across multiple systems. Fish habitat uncertainty, groundwater pathway uncertainty, treatment uncertainty, methylmercury uncertainty, closure uncertainty, and monitoring uncertainty are not independent issues. Together they impact pathways of effects to the health and socio-economic conditions of Indigenous peoples, effects to

current use, and effects to fish and fish habitat. Considered collectively, they materially undermine confidence in IAAC's significance determinations.

9. Follow-up Does Not Resolve Present Uncertainty

The Draft EA Report repeatedly treats future information gathering as a substitute for present evidentiary confidence, resulting in a structural bias toward approval despite unresolved uncertainty in evidence IAAC is relying on (at the expense of Slate Falls' information/evidence to the contrary). IAAC's draft potential conditions define follow-up programs as mechanisms to verify predictions, test mitigation effectiveness, determine whether additional mitigation is required, and define endpoints before programs can end. Draft Potential Conditions, Conditions 2.4 to 2.7, physical pages 4 to 6.

MECP Hydrology also notes that the EA does not evaluate long-term pit lake hydrology, including stratification, equilibrium conditions, or seepage exchange following reconnection. These issues are directly relevant to long-term closure performance and the assumption that treatment obligations can cease following reconnection of the dewatered basin. MECP Hydrology Memo, physical page 3.

Where uncertainty remains regarding long-term and potentially irreversible effects to fish habitat, Indigenous health, groundwater pathways, and current use, a precautionary approach requires that the uncertainty be reflected in the significance determination rather than deferred to future follow-up. In several instances, the proposed conditions transfer unresolved risk into future monitoring and adaptive management frameworks rather than resolving the underlying uncertainty itself or relying on other, credible evidence that supports an alternative conclusion (i.e. a significance finding).

Conditions requiring proponents to "monitor and adapt" do not reduce the probability or magnitude of harm where the foundational pathways, loading mechanisms, or treatment performance remain insufficiently characterized. Where material uncertainty remains about whether effects will occur, their magnitude, their duration, and whether mitigation will work, IAAC cannot use future follow-up to justify a present conclusion that effects are not significant. Conditions cannot substitute for the foundational data needed to establish whether compliance is achievable.

10. Conclusion

The federal technical comments do not provide a reliable evidentiary shield for IAAC's conclusions. DFO's broad endorsement is not reconciled with acknowledged uncertainty. ECCC identifies unresolved technical uncertainty that directly affects fish and fish habitat conclusions. NRCan's "no red flag" statement is narrow and does not address the key seepage and groundwater quality issues. Health Canada identifies errors and gaps in IAAC's Indigenous health assessment. In several cases, concerns identified by one federal agency are independently reinforced by other federal and provincial reviewers, including water balance uncertainty, seepage-related fish habitat risk, gaps in air quality monitoring, Indigenous health pathways, and limitations of follow-up and adaptive management frameworks. In some cases, the issue is not merely incomplete carry-forward of uncertainty, but direct inconsistency between IAAC's conclusions and the underlying technical advice. This includes ECCC's explicit statement that portions of the Draft EA revise or soften ECCC's approved expert information and knowledge regarding the Boreal Caribou population decline and the risk of extirpation.

The more evidence-supported conclusion is that IAAC did not have a sufficient evidentiary basis to determine that Project effects are not likely significant. At a minimum, IAAC should revise the Draft EA Report to transparently carry forward the limitations, unresolved uncertainty, and outstanding technical concerns identified by federal and provincial reviewers into the significance determinations, particularly for fish and fish habitat, groundwater and surface water pathways, Indigenous health, Boreal Caribou, federal lands, and long-term closure-related effects. Such an approach would require the significance conclusions to change across all conclusion categories.

Appendix A

The following record shows examples where the underlying technical comments are materially narrower, more qualified, or more uncertain than the manner in which they are reflected in the Draft EA Report and associated significance conclusions.

Agency	IAAC / Agency Summary Position	IAAC reference (document / section / physical page)	Underlying Limitation or Qualification	Expert reference (document / section / physical page)	Implication
DFO	IAAC and DFO indicate fish and fish habitat effects are adequately characterized	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report, Fish and Fish Habitat conclusions, physical pages 30 to 31	IAAC elsewhere acknowledges substantial uncertainty regarding fish habitat recovery, recolonization, and ecosystem response with “no known comparable situations”	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report summarizing DFO advice, Section 3.2, physical pages 30 to 31	Broad endorsement does not resolve acknowledged uncertainty
ECCC	IAAC concludes effects to Boreal Caribou and current use are not likely significant	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report, Current Use / Boreal Caribou sections	ECCC states IAAC “revised ECCC’s expert information and knowledge in a manner that makes the Project’s impacts appear less severe,” and notes worst-case regional decline to less than 12% remaining within 10 years	ECCC Comments on Draft EA Report, Comment #14, physical pages 16 to 17	IAAC characterization does not fully reflect ECCC’s approved expert information and knowledge
ECCC	Water-taking and reconnection assumptions accepted in Draft EA	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report, Closure and Reconnection discussion, physical pages 26 to 31	ECCC states “substantial uncertainty remains” regarding water quantity, water quality recovery, and fish habitat conditions	ECCC Comments on Draft EA Report, Comment ECCC #1, physical pages 1 to 2	Uncertainty not carried through to significance conclusion
ECCC	Seepage-face concentrations presented as manageable	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report, water quality / seepage discussion, physical pages 117 to 130	ECCC notes effects at seepage face not substantiated where dilution has not yet occurred	ECCC Comments on Draft EA Report, Comment ECCC #3, physical page 3	Acute localized fish health effects may be underestimated
ECCC	Accidents and malfunctions framework accepted	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report, Accidents and Malfunctions section, physical pages 338 to 349	ECCC identifies missing consideration of leaks, storage tanks, and maintenance-related releases	ECCC Comments on Draft EA Report, Comments ECCC #4 and #5, physical pages 3 to 5	Credible contaminant pathways incompletely assessed
ECCC	Federal lands effects concluded non-significant	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report, Federal Lands Effects section, physical pages 367 to 368	ECCC states it could not complete analysis due to lack of information and questions how IAAC reached non-significance conclusion	ECCC Comments on Draft EA Report, Comment ECCC #8, physical pages 6 to 8	IAAC conclusion unsupported by available evidence
ECCC / Health Canada	IAAC proposes air quality monitoring framework under Draft Conditions	IAAC Draft Potential Conditions, Condition 5.2.1, physical page 12	ECCC and Health Canada both note NO2 is predicted to exceed 1-hour CAAQS during all phases, yet NO2 is absent from monitoring parameters	ECCC Comment #9, physical pages 11 to 12; Health Canada Comment HC-06, physical page 2	Proposed monitoring framework does not fully address identified air quality effects
NRCan	“No red flag” for groundwater	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report references to groundwater follow-up and monitoring, physical pages 117 to 130	Statement explicitly limited to “groundwater quantity” and preliminary frameworks	NRCan Letter on Draft EA Report, physical page 1	Does not address groundwater quality, contaminant transport, or seepage loading
NRCan	General satisfaction with groundwater approach	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report, groundwater mitigation and follow-up discussion, physical pages 117 to 130	MECP identifies unresolved preferential pathways, seepage-face discharge, and contaminant transport issues	MECP Hydrogeology Review, physical pages 2 to 3	Narrow mandate statement overstated as broader support

Agency	IAAC / Agency Summary Position	IAAC reference (document / section / physical page)	Underlying Limitation or Qualification	Expert reference (document / section / physical page)	Implication
Health Canada	IAAC concludes country food impacts below “thresholds”	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report, Section 7.1.1 Human Health, physical pages 57 to 58	Health Canada states such thresholds do not exist in cited guidance	Health Canada Comments on Draft EA Report, Comment HC-EA-05, physical page 3	IAAC relies on inaccurate characterization of Health Canada guidance
Health Canada	Health effects manageable through follow-up	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report, Human Health Follow-up discussion, physical pages 57 to 63	Health Canada identifies uncertainty due to absence of community-specific consumption data	Health Canada Comments on Draft EA Report, Comment HC-EA-04, physical page 3	Health risk uncertainty unresolved
Health Canada	Surface water and country foods monitoring proposed	IAAC Draft Potential Conditions, follow-up and monitoring sections, physical pages 4 to 6	Health Canada states monitoring endpoints remain undefined	Health Canada Comments on Draft EA Report, Comment HC-02, physical page 4	Follow-up framework incomplete
MECP Hydrogeology	Monitoring and contingency measures proposed	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report and Draft Conditions, groundwater follow-up sections, physical pages 117 to 130 and conditions sections	MECP states monitoring may not work reliably if preferential pathways are not first characterized	MECP Hydrogeology Review, physical pages 2 to 3	Monitoring cannot substitute for pathway characterization
MECP Hydrogeology	IAAC relies on monitoring and adaptive management to manage groundwater uncertainty	IAAC Draft Conditions and groundwater follow-up sections	MECP states monitoring and contingency measures may be unreliable unless preferential groundwater pathways are first adequately characterized	MECP Hydrogeology Review, physical pages 2 to 3	Follow-up cannot substitute for foundational pathway characterization
MECP Hydrology	IAAC assumes closure and reconnection framework sufficient for abandonment and cessation of treatment obligations	IAAC Draft Conditions, abandonment / closure framework sections	MECP states the EA does not evaluate long-term pit lake hydrology, including stratification, equilibrium, and seepage exchange	MECP Hydrology Memo, physical page 3	Long-term closure performance remains insufficiently characterized
MECP Surface Water	Effluent treatment assumed effective	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report, water treatment and discharge discussion, physical pages 117 to 130	MECP states treatment design details, limits, and mixing zones remain unresolved	MECP Surface Water Review, physical pages 2 to 3	Treatment performance not sufficiently demonstrated

Appendix B

The record contains direct inconsistencies between IAAC's conclusions and the technical advice before it. In some cases, IAAC's statements are not merely incomplete; they are contradicted by the federal agency's comments. The clearest example is Health Canada's submission that its Country Foods guidance does not provide contaminant thresholds, despite IAAC relying on those thresholds to support its health conclusion.

Issue	IAAC says	IAAC reference (document / section / physical page)	Regulator says	Regulator reference (document / section / physical page)	Assessment
Country foods	IAAC says increases would be below "thresholds established in Health Canada's Guidance" and not expected to cause health impacts.	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report, Section 7.1.1 Human Health, physical pages 57 to 58	Health Canada says its Country Foods guidance "does not provide contaminant 'thresholds'" and that those references are inaccurate.	Health Canada Comments on Draft EA Report, Table 1, Comment HC-EA-05, physical page 3	Direct contradiction
Boreal Caribou	IAAC concludes effects are not likely significant	IAAC Draft EA Report, Boreal Caribou / current use sections	ECCC states IAAC revised ECCC expert information "in a manner that makes the Project's impacts appear less severe"	ECCC Comment #14, physical pages 16 to 17	Material inconsistency
Federal lands	IAAC concludes the Project is not likely to cause significant adverse effects on federal lands and recommends no further mitigation or follow-up.	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report, Federal Lands Effects Section, physical pages 367 to 368	ECCC states it lacked the information needed to assess federal lands effects and was uncertain how IAAC reached a non-significance conclusion.	ECCC Comments on Draft EA Report, Comment ECCC #8, physical pages 6 to 8	Direct inconsistency
Navigation / portaging significance	IAAC concludes no significant effects to current use broadly.	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report, Current Use of Lands and Resources for Traditional Purposes, significance conclusions section, physical pages 309 to 312	Transport Canada says IAAC's section on navigation and portaging acknowledges residual effects but is silent on significance, creating uncertainty.	Transport Canada Letter on Draft EA Report, navigation and portaging comments, physical pages 1 to 2	Direct inconsistency / internal inconsistency
Surface water / fish effects	IAAC concludes residual effects on fish and fish habitat are not likely significant.	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report, Fish and Fish Habitat, significance conclusions section, physical pages 30 to 31	MECP surface water says uncertainties remain and "the potential remains for impacts to fish and/or fish habitat."	MECP Surface Water Review, residual impacts and uncertainty comments, physical pages 2 to 3	Contradiction
Groundwater risk	IAAC relies on criteria, monitoring, adaptive management, and future permitting.	IAAC Draft Environmental Assessment Report, groundwater and follow-up sections, physical pages 117 to 130 and conditions sections	MECP hydrogeology says preferential pathways and seepage uncertainty remain, and monitoring may be less reliable unless pathways are first characterized.	MECP Hydrogeology Review, preferential pathways and monitoring limitations, physical pages 2 to 3	Contradiction