



FIRST NATION COUNCIL

P. O. Box 1, Fort Albany, Ontario P0L 1H0

Tel: 705-278-1044 Fax: 705-278-1193

January 16, 2020

Via email: iaac.webequie.aeic@canada.ca

Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
Ontario Region
600-55 York Street
Toronto ON MSJ 1R7

Attn: Caitlin Cafaro, Project Analyst, Crown Consultation Coordinator

Dear Ms. Cafaro,

Re: Webequie Supply Road Project - Confirmation of Fort Albany First Nation's request to be consulted

This letter is to confirm that Fort Albany First Nation wishes to be consulted throughout the federal impact assessment process relating to the Webequie First Nation Supply Road, as we believe that our rights and interests may be impacted by this project.

Fort Albany First Nation wishes to support Webequie First Nation in achieving its goals, while also ensuring that we meet our responsibilities to our people and in relation to our territories. We approach this impact assessment process in that spirit.

Fort Albany First Nation has not yet commented on this Project through the Crown process, in part due to the capacity and resource challenges we face. However, we consider it important to formally engage with this process now to ensure that we get the information we need and our voice can be heard at the right moments.

In your email of January 10, 2020, you requested that we provide the Impact Assessment Agency with "information on the nature, extent, and scope Fort Albany First Nation's Aboriginal and Treaty Rights and how they may be impacted by the Project."

It is our wish to participate in the consultation process very soon, particularly in relation to the January 28 deadline for comment on the draft Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines and the draft Indigenous Engagement and Participation Plan.

In this context, and currently having no dedicated financial resources to support additional work, we cannot provide comprehensive information about the nature, extent, and scope of our rights and how they may be impacted by this Project. To the extent that detailed information about our rights and anticipated impacts is necessary and appropriate for us to share, we will provide it as part of the consultation process once there is funding in place to support the costs of doing so.

However, recognizing that the Agency has requested this information to “help inform the Crown’s conduct regarding consultation”, we can provide some further views about why Fort Albany First Nation wishes to be consulted.

Firstly, Fort Albany First Nation’s rights and interests extend well beyond the limits of our reservation. We have an inherent interest in anything that will have impacts within the Mushkegowuk Aski, the traditional territory of the Omushkegowuk, to which we belong. It is our understanding from the Project Description for the Webequie Road that it will certainly have such impacts.

We recognize that First Nations in the region of the Project will be impacted by it in different ways, and that some may need to be engaged in the consultation more deeply than others. Fort Albany may be shielded from some certain impacts by virtue of being located in a different watershed than the Project, and being farther away from it than some of the immediately neighbouring First Nations, for instance.

Nevertheless, we are still part of a broader regional ecosystem that includes the proposed Project location. We are concerned that potential impacts of the Project on the animals, plants, waters, and air in the region have the potential to impact several of our Aboriginal and treaty rights. Further, the prospect that the Project will add to the rapidly-warming climate (including through the release of sequestered carbon if muskeg/peatlands are damaged or destroyed during construction) is also of concern to us, as climate change is one of the greatest threats to our way of life and ability to exercise our rights.

We share some of the concerns already expressed by others and reflected in the Summary of the Detailed Project Description, particularly about the potential environmental impacts of road construction and operation. We want to better understand these potential impacts and participate in the discussions about how to avoid, mitigate, and manage them.

Fort Albany First Nation is particularly interested in the cumulative impacts of projects in the region. Understanding these impacts will become more and more important as development pressures in the region increase. We have been or are already involved in consultations for related projects in the region of the Webequie Project, including the Eagle’s Nest Mine and the Marten Falls Community Access Road Project. Our participation in the Webequie Road consultation will help ensure that our understanding of cumulative impacts can be enhanced, and our views taken into account with each project.

We note that Fort Albany First Nation was already identified by Ontario as a community for consultation in relation to the Webequie Road, and we are in the final stages of getting funding in place to participate in the provincial consultation process. Our participation in the federal consultation will encourage greater consistency and coherence between these processes.

We look forward to promptly receiving any information and documents being shared with participating First Nations, and to receiving funding to allow for our participation during the current phase of the process.

Yours truly,

<original signed by>

Chief Leo Metatawabin