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Re: Upper Beaver Gold Project (IAAC Reference No. 82960) — Disclosure of Digital Stakeholder Categorization Practices, and Request for Agency Guidance on Artificial Intelligence and Stakeholder Profiling in Federal Impact Assessments

Dear Impact Assessment Agency of Canada,

I am writing as a property owner on Beaverhouse Lake, in Dobie/Gauthier Township, and a participant in the consultation process for the Upper Beaver Gold Project. This letter raises two related but distinct matters: first, a request that Agnico Eagle Mines Limited ("Agnico Eagle") disclose specifics of the digital platform it uses to collect, categorize, and manage stakeholder engagement data for this Project; and second, a broader request that the Agency clarify its position on the use of artificial intelligence, behavioural analytics, and digital stakeholder-profiling tools by proponents across federal impact assessments generally.

Part A — Upper Beaver Project: Stakeholder Categorization and Data Practices

The triggering disclosure. In the course of stakeholder correspondence related to this Project, several internal email addresses associated with a "Boréalis Information System" (BIS) were inadvertently visible to me. The visible address labels included category-type references such as "Upper Beaver," "Impact Assessment," "Opposition," "Neutral," "Good Neighbourhood Process," and "Community – Access," among other apparent engagement categories. I want to be precise about what this does and does not establish: on its own, it does not show how these categories are defined, applied, weighted, or acted upon internally. It does, however, confirm that Upper Beaver stakeholders are being sorted within a structured digital system that includes stance-based labels — at minimum, something resembling "Opposition" and "Neutral" — alongside process- and geography-based labels. It is also my understanding that the Project team's communications with stakeholders — their tone, content, or frequency — differ depending on which category a stakeholder has been assigned, which is precisely the kind of tailored, audience-specific communication practice that warrants disclosure rather than inference.

What "Boréalis" is. This is consistent with, and helps explain, a documented corporate relationship: Agnico Eagle has been a publicly referenced client of Boréalis (Boreal – Information Stratégiques 2014 Inc.), a Sherbrooke, Quebec-based stakeholder relationship management platform, since at least 2018, when a joint case study described its use for Nunavut community relations and specifically noted that Agnico Eagle "has expanded its use of the Boréalis platform to include more projects in Ontario."[1] Boréalis's own privacy policy distinguishes between "User Information" (its own software customers) and "Online Service Data" — the stakeholder data that clients like Agnico Eagle enter about the community members they engage with — and states that "the responsibility toward Stakeholders for the gathering, collection, maintenance, processing and proper destruction of their personal information always rests with our Customers,"[2] meaning Agnico Eagle, not Boréalis. No Agnico Eagle privacy policy or data-handling disclosure specific to how Upper Beaver stakeholders are categorized, or for what purpose, appears to be publicly available or on file with the Agency.

Related vendors. Agnico Eagle is also a documented client of Voconiq, an Australian community-sentiment survey firm, at its Fosterville mine.[3] Voconiq's privacy policy discloses that it draws "Identity and Contact Data" from "publicly available sources," expressly naming Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram, and separately lists "Transfert Environnement et Société based in Canada" among its own third-party field data collectors.[4] Voconiq also operates a CCPA-style opt-out for the "sale" and "sharing" of personal information, including specifically for "Sharing for Targeted Advertising Purposes."[5] Transfert Environnement et Société is, in turn, separately and extensively documented as Agnico Eagle's contracted facilitator for community and Indigenous monitoring committees at several of the company's Quebec operations, including Canadian Malartic, Wasamac, Goldex, and Akasaba Ouest[6] — a role materially similar to the Advisory Committee process underway for Upper Beaver.

To be precise about the limits of the public record: I have not found, and am not asserting, that Upper Beaver-specific stakeholder data has been sold to unrelated third parties. What is established is (i) a stance-based categorization system operating on this Project, visible firsthand through the BIS address disclosure described above; (ii) a confirmed, ongoing corporate relationship between Agnico Eagle and Boréalis, the platform that name most plausibly corresponds to; (iii) related vendor relationships (Voconiq, Transfert Environnement et Société) involving social-media-sourced identity data and cross-border data flows; and (iv) Boréalis's own policy assigning responsibility for stakeholder data to Agnico Eagle, with no corresponding Agnico Eagle disclosure yet in the Project record.

Information Requested of Agnico Eagle

I respectfully request that the Agency direct Agnico Eagle to provide the following, either as part of the Impact Statement or as a standalone information response:

1. Confirmation of what the "Boréalis Information System" (or equivalent platform) categories referenced above — including any resembling "Opposition" and "Neutral" — mean; how a stakeholder is assigned to one and who makes that determination; and whether the content, tone, or frequency of Project communications to a stakeholder differs depending on their assigned category.

2. Confirmation of whether Voconiq, Transfert Environnement et Société, and/or any comparable third-party platform is being used, or is planned to be used, to collect, store, analyze, or report on stakeholder or community engagement data specifically for Upper Beaver, including in the Beaverhouse Lake and Dobie/Gauthier Township area.

3. The specific privacy policy, data processing agreement, or equivalent disclosure governing Upper Beaver stakeholder data, and confirmation of which entity — Agnico Eagle, the vendor, or both — is the data controller responsible for it.

4. Confirmation of whether any Upper Beaver stakeholder or engagement data is, or will be, cross-referenced with, or supplemented by, information drawn from Facebook or other social media platforms.

5. Confirmation of whether Upper Beaver stakeholder data (survey responses, sentiment or stance scores, contact information, or grievance/complaint records) could be transferred to a third party in the event of a business sale, merger, restructuring, or bankruptcy involving Agnico Eagle or its vendors, and what contractual provisions, if any, would restrict such a transfer.

6. The data retention period, security safeguards, and consent or correction mechanisms that apply specifically to Upper Beaver stakeholders, including whether a stakeholder may see their own categorization and request that it be corrected.

7. Whether any automated or AI-driven analysis (e.g., sentiment scoring, stance classification, or engagement-pattern analysis) is applied to Upper Beaver stakeholder submissions and, if so, documentation of the methodology and the extent of human review involved.

8. Confirmation of where stakeholder information entered into the Boréalis Information System, or any equivalent platform, is stored, including the jurisdiction, hosting location, and ownership or control of the relevant servers or cloud infrastructure; and disclosure of any agreements governing data access, information usage, retention, transfer, or sharing between Agnico Eagle, Boréalis, and any third-party server owner, cloud-service provider, or hosting provider with respect to Upper Beaver stakeholder information.

Part B — Request for Agency Guidance on Artificial Intelligence and Digital Stakeholder Profiling

The Upper Beaver experience described above is, I believe, an illustration of a broader and rapidly growing practice. Modern stakeholder-engagement platforms are increasingly capable of collecting, organizing, and analyzing large volumes of information from emails, meetings, public submissions, and websites — identifying relationships, scoring sentiment or stance, prioritizing individuals for engagement, and recommending communication strategies tailored to specific audiences. These capabilities carry real implications for democratic participation. If such tools are used to profile participants, predict behaviour, or tailor communications intended to influence perceptions or responses, consultation risks becoming an exercise in behavioural management rather than meaningful public dialogue — even where the

technology was adopted for ordinary administrative efficiency. Meaningful participation requires more than an opportunity to submit comments; it requires confidence that participants are not being categorized or analyzed by automated systems without transparency or safeguards. This is a question of procedural fairness and public confidence in the impact assessment system, not only of privacy law.

This is not a hypothetical risk. In 2026, California's South Coast Air Quality Management District received more than 20,000 public comments opposing a clean-air rule that were later traced to an "AI-powered" advocacy platform generating thousands of individually varied, realistic-sounding submissions on behalf of industry clients; when the agency tried to verify a sample of commenters, almost none responded, and some confirmed they had never submitted anything.[7] A peer-reviewed 2019 study demonstrated the same vulnerability by submitting AI-generated "deepfake text" comments to a U.S. federal Medicaid rulemaking, finding that human reviewers could not distinguish the fabricated comments from genuine ones at a rate better than chance.[8] In 2021, an investigation by the New York Attorney General found that roughly 18 of the 22 million comments received by the U.S. Federal Communications Commission during its net neutrality repeal were fake, submitted using stolen or fabricated identities and funded by industry interests.[9] And the Facebook–Cambridge Analytica matter remains the clearest illustration of the underlying concern raised by Part A of this letter: personal data harvested from a social media platform, built into behavioural or "psychographic" profiles, and used to target individually tailored messaging at scale.[10] None of these examples involves Agnico Eagle, and I am not suggesting equivalence. I raise them because each shows how quickly data-driven categorization and communication tools, once adopted for a legitimate purpose, can be turned toward shaping or distorting public input rather than genuinely listening to it — which is precisely the assurance Part A of this letter asks Agnico Eagle to provide for Upper Beaver.

Other jurisdictions also offer a useful positive comparison. Taiwan's digital-governance initiatives — including the vTaiwan and Join platforms associated with its digital government efforts — are internationally recognized for using digital tools to increase the transparency of how public input shapes policy outcomes, rather than to optimize engagement strategies directed at the public. Canada's impact assessment system has an opportunity to adopt similar principles: artificial intelligence should strengthen public participation, not create an information asymmetry between well-resourced proponents and the individuals and communities affected by their projects.

Questions for the Agency

Accordingly, I respectfully request that the Agency advise:

1. Whether IAAC is currently studying the use of artificial intelligence, behavioural analytics, or digital stakeholder-management systems by proponents during federal impact assessments.
2. Whether IAAC has assessed if AI-assisted stakeholder profiling or tailored communication strategies could affect the fairness or integrity of public participation.
3. Whether IAAC is developing, or intends to recommend, guidance governing proponents' use of AI in federal consultation processes.

4. Whether the Government of Canada is considering legislation or regulations requiring proponents to disclose when AI is used to collect, analyze, categorize, summarize, or otherwise process stakeholder information.

5. Whether IAAC will recommend that stakeholders have a right to know what information is held about them, how AI or automated categorization has been used in relation to their participation, and how they may request correction of inaccurate information.

6. Whether IAAC will consider minimum standards for transparency, explainability, independent auditing, and human oversight wherever AI or automated categorization systems are used in federally regulated public consultation.

The emergence of artificial intelligence represents one of the more significant changes to public engagement practice in recent years. Without clear standards, participants may take part in consultation processes without knowing that automated systems are categorizing, prioritizing, or shaping how their views are interpreted and responded to. I submit that the Agency is well placed to provide national leadership on this question, and I would welcome the Agency's confirmation of whether it is studying these issues and whether new guidance or regulatory recommendations are under development.

I would appreciate a written response to both Parts A and B at the Agency's earliest convenience, and I reserve the right to raise these questions further in my formal comments on the Upper Beaver Impact Statement.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Chaves
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