

JOINT LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING ON PEEL WATERSHED REGIONAL LAND USE PLANNING PROCESS

The purpose of this letter is to confirm the joint commitment by the Parties to the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan to establish a coordinated process for responding to the Recommended Plan. It also seeks to clarify objectives, principles, timeframes and procedures for continued progress on the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan process and completion of the Plan.

The Parties are the First Nation of Na-cho Nyäk Dun; the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation; the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in; the Gwich'in Tribal Council, and the Government of the Yukon.

OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

The Yukon government acknowledges the obligation to consult with the affected Yukon First Nations in respect of the Recommended Plan pursuant to Chapter 11 of the collective Yukon First Nation Final Agreements, and to consult in affected Yukon communities.

The Yukon First Nations acknowledge the obligation to consult with the Yukon government in respect of the Recommended Plan pursuant to Chapter 11 of the Yukon First Nation Final Agreements.

The First Nation of Na-cho Nyäk Dun, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, and the Government of the Yukon agree to consult with the Gwich'in Tribal Council in respect of the recommended Plan. In addition, the Parties agree to joint community consultations.

In the process of developing a coordinated response to the Plan, the Parties agree to be guided by the objectives of Yukon First Nation Final Agreements.

A key objective of this process is to endeavour to achieve consensus on a coordinated response the Peel Watershed Planning Commission on the Recommended Plan.

TIMEFRAMES

As outlined in Chapter 11, there is extensive and complex work required for the review, consultation, and response process. All Parties will endeavour to achieve the following key milestones in the planning process (see Appendix 1 for detailed timeline):

- Plan Review (internal and intergovernmental) to be completed May 2010.
- Consultation (affected communities and intergovernmental) to be completed October 2010.
- Response to the Peel Watershed Planning Commission to be completed December 2010, or sooner if possible.

PLAN REVIEW

To enable a thorough review of the Recommended Plan, each of the Parties will take sufficient time to conduct their respective internal reviews. They will then work together in a collaborative review of the plan using the expertise and support of the Technical Working Group and the Senior Liaison Committee.

These reviews – internal and collaborative - will identify and scope issues that could be further addressed through First Nation Final Agreement processes regarding the Recommended Plan.

Unless otherwise agreed to, the Parties are responsible for their respective costs in conducting the review and consultation processes outlined in this letter.

CONSULTATION

The Government of Yukon and the relevant individual First Nations agree to jointly conduct community consultations in Whitehorse, Mayo, Old Crow, Dawson City and Fort McPherson. The other affected First Nations may choose to also participate in these consultations.

The approach to community consultations will be designed and implemented collaboratively using the Technical Working Group and the Senior Liaison Committee.

Following the community consultations, the Parties will proceed with formal intergovernmental Consultation. The intent of these intergovernmental Consultations is to achieve a shared position and joint response on the recommended Plan.

The Parties agree that the Senior Liaison Committee shall serve as the primary conduit for the intergovernmental consultations, supporting the principals of the Parties

RESPONSE TO THE COMMISSION

Following consultations, the Parties will work together to develop a joint or coordinated response to the Recommended Plan.

If desired, opportunities will be provided for the elected leaders of the Parties to meet and work together towards this coordinated response.

The Parties recognize that they may not be able to achieve consensus on all aspects of the Plan. If this occurs, the Parties may submit individual responses on aspects of the plan for which they could not achieve consensus.

Notwithstanding any independent positions that may develop on certain aspects of the Plan, the Parties will endeavour to present positions that are consistent with an integrated approach to resource and land management in the region.

COMMUNICATIONS

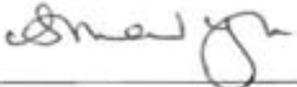
In order to promote inter-party cooperation and coordination the Parties will use the Senior Liaison Committee as a forum for developing joint communications in respect of processes and outcomes related to the Recommended Plan and any responses to it (see Appendix 2 for joint messages). It is anticipated that the coordination will enable the Parties to speak in a collaborative fashion.

The Parties will provide prior notification to each other of any independent press releases related to the Recommended Plan.

In conclusion, the Parties are committed to continue to work collaboratively to enable progress on the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Planning process.

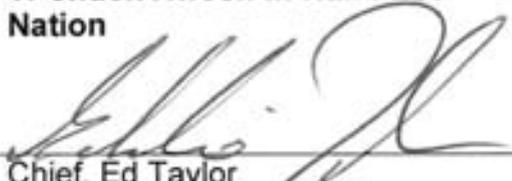
Signed this 25 day of January, 2010

First Nation of Na-cho Nyäk Dun



Chief, Simon Mervyn

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Han First Nation



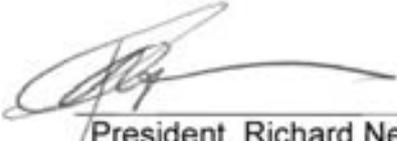
Chief, Ed Taylor

Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation



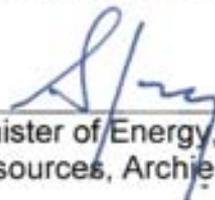
Chief, Joe Linklater

Gwich'in Tribal Council



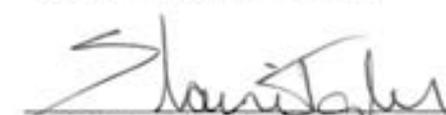
President, Richard Nerysoo

Government of Yukon



Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, Archie Lang

Government of Yukon



Minister of Environment
Elaine Taylor

Appendix 1

JOINT LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING ON PEEL WATERSHED REGIONAL LAND USE PLANNING PROCESS
Projected Timeline for Review, Consultation, and Response under Chapter 11.6
January- December, 2010

Project phase	Task	Milestone	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Plan review		Sign LOU* on Ch. 11.6 process	▼											
	Internal reviews of plan													
	TWG and SLC collaboration on issues summary													
		Issues summary						▼						
	Government approvals													
Consultation		Consultation Plan					▼							
	Consultation with Affected communities													
	TWG and SLC collaboration on new issues summary													
		Issues summary												
	Intergovernmental consultation													
Response	TWG and SLC collaboration on draft response													
		Response to Commission												▼

* LOU = Letter of Understanding

APPENDIX 2 - MESSAGES

JOINT LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING ON PEEL REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN PLANNING PROCESS

The Parties have signed a joint letter of understanding that outlines our commitment to move forward on the extensive and challenging work needed to complete the Peel Regional Land Use Plan review and approvals process.

The Parties honour and acknowledge their commitments under the respective Yukon First Nation Final Agreements, and as such, will continue to follow the processes outlined in Chapter 11 of the Final Agreements.

As outlined in Chapter 11, there is extensive and complex work required for the review, consultation, and response process.

We have agreed to work collaboratively towards a number of key milestones in the planning process. We look forward to completing the initial (internal and intergovernmental) plan review May 2010, the public consultation October 2010 and have a response to the Peel Watershed Planning Commission by December 2010, or sooner if possible.

The Peel region has significant cultural, heritage, and economic value, and the Parties are committed to continue to work collaboratively to enable the completion of the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan.

The objective of regional land use planning is to provide guidance for the integrated management of lands and resources in order to ensure sustainable development and sound environmental stewardship while minimizing land use conflicts. As such, the internal reviews will take some time to complete.

The Parties' acknowledge that the Peel watershed is important to the region's aboriginal peoples and has environmental, social, cultural and economic values of tremendous importance as well as having national and international values.

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We will work collaboratively to achieve a final plan that incorporates a variety of land use activities in a balanced manner within the Peel watershed that also addresses the interests of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, First Nation of Nacho Nyäk Dun, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, and Yukon government on behalf of all our citizens.

The Parties will provide opportunities for the public, stakeholders and affected communities to offer their perspectives on the Recommended Plan.