

February 18, 2011

Chair, Peel Watershed Regional Planning Commission
307 Jarvis Street, Suite 201
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 2H3

Dear Chair:

Re: Joint Response to the Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan

This correspondence is a joint response from the Parties to your Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan (Recommended Plan).

The views presented herein are held in common by the Parties and are intended to provide guidance to the Commission as you consider the input from the Parties, as required under sections 11.6.3.1 and 11.6.5.1 of the First Nation Final Agreements, toward development of your Final Recommended Plan.

All Parties participating in this regional land use planning process agree that the Peel watershed is a unique area that encompasses many areas of cultural and environmental significance; and that, given the values and the largely pristine state of the region; selected areas will be excluded from development and afforded high levels of protection.

In addition to this joint response, each Party will send supplementary comments that are specific to their interests and responsibilities.

Implementation and Role of the Parties

- a) The Recommended Plan proposes that the Commission remain active after the regional land use plan has been approved to review all requests for plan variances and amendments, and to determine project conformity with the plan under the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Act* (YESAA) assessments.

It is the collective responsibility of the Parties to determine how and when the plan should be reviewed, varied or amended. The Parties have an opportunity to develop

a collaborative approach to plan implementation as demonstrated in the North Yukon regional planning process.

Notwithstanding 12.17.1 of the First Nation Final Agreements, it is our view that the Parties will determine whether a proposed project is in conformity with the approved Peel Watershed land use plan. The Yukon Land Use Planning Council may provide assistance in determining conformity, if agreed by the Parties. We believe these views accord with Chapter 11.2.0, and we encourage the Commission to develop a Final Recommended Plan that incorporates these views.

- b) The Recommended Plan proposes that up to 19 subsequent plans may be required after the regional land use plan has been approved.

While acknowledging that further planning will be required for specific areas, the Parties would prefer that the regional land use plan contain the key management guidance for the region. This will enable the Parties to effectively implement the regional plan, and simplify the management regime for land and resource managers and stakeholders who have responsibilities and interests within the region.

- c) The Recommended Plan proposes frequent plan review, variance, and amendment.

Recognizing that a regional land use plan requires periodic review, the Parties are seeking a land use plan that provides clear and consistent guidance over a longer term. We recognize that amendments or variances will be necessary over time, but feel that the plan should only change if there are substantial reasons for doing so. We encourage the Commission to reconsider its proposed approach of frequent plan variances and amendments.

Complexity and Usability of the Plan

- a) The recommended management regime is complex, with the region subdivided into 24 Land Management Units (LMUs), with significant similarities amongst the LMUs with regards to management intent.

To improve plan clarity and enable the Parties to effectively use the plan, we encourage a re-evaluation of the zones and associated management recommendations and ask the Commission to explore opportunities to consolidate some of the LMUs. Consolidating LMUs will assist in any subsequent planning exercises deemed necessary by the Parties.

- b) We believe the Recommended Plan is difficult to follow due to its level of detail and the organization of the content.

In order to ensure the Parties and public can effectively use the plan; we encourage the Commission to work towards a simplified and more streamlined document that focuses on providing clear guidance for land and resource management.

We encourage the Commission to consider these joint Party comments in your development of a Final Recommended Plan.

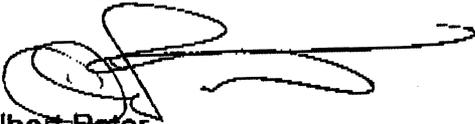
As a number of steps remain in your process of developing a Final Recommended Plan, and subsequent approval of a Final Land use Plan, we wish to inform you that the Yukon government has issued a one-year extension to the interim staking withdrawal of the Peel planning region. Additionally, rights for oil and gas, and coal will not be issued in the region during this period.

The Parties' final positions on a regional land use plan for the Peel Watershed will be determined when our collective obligations under Chapter 11 of the First Nation Final Agreements have been fulfilled and the Parties have concluded a thorough review of the Final Recommended Plan.

In order to see this process through to its conclusion, the Parties have signed an updated Joint Letter of Understanding, with timeline, attached for your information. Please note that we are looking to receive your Final Recommended Plan no later than the first part of July, 2011. Please make best efforts to achieve this timeline.

Thank you for your dedicated hard work on this planning process, and we wish you well in your work ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Albert Peter', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Albert Peter
Chair, Senior Liaison Committee