



For Immediate Release

Yukon Chamber of Commerce Chamber encouraged by YESAB response

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WHITEHORSE – The Yukon Chamber of Commerce has entered into dialogue with the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (“YESAB”) to support efforts to improve the effectiveness of YESAB’s engagement with the business community.

“We are pleased that in initial consultations, YESAB has indicated they are prepared to listen and act on specific concerns from the business community, and that they have a strong desire to improve efficiency, consistency and effectiveness of the process wherever possible.” said Rich Thompson, Chairman of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce. “They clearly understand the importance of working effectively with the business community and know well the impact their recommendations can have on the Yukon economy. We believe that the ideal outcome for everyone is that we work together on ensuring a highly effective assessment process for all.”

In February 2016, the Yukon Chamber issued a press release expressing concerns related to recent YESAB decisions. The Chamber had heard from the business community as well as investors in and outside of the territory that the message they are receiving is that the Yukon was not “open for business”. The Chamber believes that the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act is a solid piece of legislation and that it can be effectively implemented to meet the needs of all stakeholders in the Yukon. The Chamber further believes that we all have a responsibility to make sure the execution of the Act is supported in a way that maximizes its effectiveness for all Yukoners. Chamber discussions with YESAB have revealed a strong alignment of interests and that there is significant room to work collaboratively to ensure that the process benefits from ongoing improvement in a way that sends the message that the Yukon is committed to environmentally sustainable development and a predictable operating environment for businesses.

In several meetings, the Chamber and YESAB have discussed a number of potential changes that could improve the process. YESAB has shared that it is embarking on the development of a pre-submission engagement process for projects submitted to the executive committee. This will be a process that creates an informal first step that will significantly assist proponents in ensuring they are ready for the most efficient process possible when submissions enter the formal phase. This process will provide a better understanding of baseline information requirements and facilitate early identification of potential project-related issues, as well as possible means to address those issues. In addition the Chamber is assessing whether it can provide third-party liaison in a way that

will allow problems to be identified and prioritized between proponents and YESAB on particular projects. This outreach program would be modeled on a successful role that the Yukon Chamber has put in place with the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board for delivery of the Employer Advisor Service

“The perception around effectiveness of YESAB potentially impacts all sectors of the Yukon economy and certainly sends clear signals to those looking to invest in the territory” added Peter Turner, Yukon Chamber President. “Sending the wrong signals impacts not only the resource sector, but also tourism, commercial development and other sectors of the economy. It is critical that investors see the Yukon as a place that wants to do business. That is why the Chamber is keen to work directly with YESAB on improvements to the process that will lead to getting the signals right.”

Incorporated in 1985, the Yukon Chamber of Commerce is the collective voice of Yukon's Business Community, working to create a climate conducive to a strong private-sector economy by providing leadership and representation on issues and projects affecting business. The Chamber represents over 700 Yukon businesses, through either direct or Community Chamber membership, as well as the five Community Chambers of Dawson City, Silver Trail, St. Elias Region, Watson Lake and Whitehorse.

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