



News Release

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Public Input Invited on New Assessment Rules

The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) is inviting the public to make written representations concerning its proposed Rules of Practice and Procedure for environmental and socio-economic assessments. In order to be considered by the Board, all representations must be received by September 30th, 2005.

The Rules set out the details of how YESAB will carry out assessments under the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* (YESAA). Currently, environmental assessments in the Yukon are conducted either under the Yukon's *Environmental Assessment Act* (EAA) or, where federal agencies are involved, the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA). As soon as the federal regulations that accompany YESAA are completed, expected this fall, assessments will be carried out under YESAA instead.

"Since last fall, we have been working on the draft Rules for our assessment processes," said Board Chair Dale Eftoda. "We have sought input and advice from regulators, practitioners, decision bodies and stakeholders. The Rules have also been available for public review on our website for a number of months. Now we have reached a new stage in our Rules development and are inviting views and comments from a wider audience."

This stage is sometimes referred to as the "Gazetting" period. Beginning June 18, 2005, notice of YESAB's draft Rules was published in the Canada Gazette, as well as in the Yukon News and the Inuvik Drum. Notices have also been sent for posting in all Yukon community post offices.

"The Rules deal with matters that are important for anyone participating in an assessment," said Eftoda. "They deal with timelines for the assessment, the type of information that will be used and the ways in which the public can participate. We encourage all Yukoners to review the draft Rules and provide us with written comments that will be considered fully and fairly before the proposed Rules are finalized."

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The draft Rules are available on the YESAB website, or by contacting the Board's office.

Under the terms of the YESAA legislation, there are three different types of assessment processes, depending on the size and potential significance of the project being proposed. The Board has developed Rules for all three of these processes.

The Designated Office evaluation process will apply to the majority of projects being assessed. This type of assessment will be carried out by an assessment officer in one of YESAB's six community-based offices located in Dawson City, Haines Junction, Mayo, Teslin, Watson Lake and Whitehorse.

The Executive Committee screening process will apply to larger projects that come to the Committee directly, or that are referred by a Designated Office. This type of assessment will be carried out by the three-person Executive Committee of the Board.

The Panel of the Board review process will apply to projects with potential significant adverse effects, that are likely to cause significant public concern, that involve the use of new or controversial technology, or if other types of YESAA assessment bodies have been unable to come to a recommendation. This type of assessment will be carried out by members of the Board who have been appointed to a Panel.

The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board was formed in June 2004. The Board was created under the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* (YESAA), which establishes a process to assess effects of projects and other activities in the Yukon or that might affect the Yukon. This is a requirement of Chapter 12 of the Umbrella Final Agreement and Yukon First Nations' Final Agreements. YESAB is an independent arms-length board which will administer an assessment process that will be carried out by six regional Designated Offices, the Executive Committee of the Board and Panels of the Board.

For more information, visit our website at www.yesab.ca or contact:

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