



News Release

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Consultation Period on Assessment Rules Ending Soon

The public has until the end of this month to make written representations concerning the proposed Rules of Procedure for assessments under the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* (YESAA).

The proposed Rules were drafted by the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) and have been available for public comment since mid-June. All representations must be received by September 30th, 2005, in order to be considered by the Board during finalization of the Rules.

To help the public understand YESAB's roles and responsibilities and its proposed Rules, the Board has been conducting public meetings throughout the Yukon in August and September.

"The public meetings are a good way for people to gain a greater understanding of how the new assessment process will work and how they can participate in it," says Board Chair Dale Eftoda. "Board members are eager to answer any questions that people may have. We hope our community tour will help increase the public's level of knowledge and comfort with how assessments will be carried out under YESAA."

The public meetings are being publicized through newspaper ads, letters to stakeholders, posters and the YESAB website, www.yesab.ca.

An information kit has been prepared that includes the proposed Rules, Plain Language Guides to the Rules, the Act, and a number of Fact Sheets and Backgrounders. The kit has been mailed out to stakeholders and is available at each public meeting. Copies of all materials in the kit can also be downloaded at YESAB's website.

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The Board began working on the proposed Rules last fall, seeking input and advice from regulators, practitioners, decision bodies and stakeholders.

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 come into effect, expected in November, assessments will be carried out under YESAA instead.

Under the YESAA legislation, there are three different types of assessment processes.

The Designated Office evaluation process will apply to most projects. This type of assessment will be carried out by an assessment officer in one of YESAB's six 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 are referred by a Designated Office. This type of assessment will be carried out by the Executive Committee of the Board.

The Panel of the Board review process will apply to projects that have potentially significant adverse effects, are likely to cause significant public concern, involve use of new or controversial technology, or if a Designated Office or the Executive Committee is unable to come to a recommendation. This type of assessment will be carried out by Board members appointed to a Panel.

The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board is an independent board, which operates at arms-length from government. The Board was formed in June 2004 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.

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

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