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Environmental Assessment Office

Collected Public Comments for Blackwater Gold Project

October 9, 2013 to November 8, 2013

Comments will be available on this page until November 22, 2013 and after this date all posted comments will be available through the EAO [electronic Project Information Centre \(ePIC\)](#) application.

November 8, 2013

Mayor Gerry Thiessen - Vanderhoof, British Columbia



District of Vanderhoof

Incorporated 1926

Geographical Centre of BC

November 7, 2013

Shelley Murphy, Executive Project Director
Environmental Assessment Office (EAO)
PO Box 9426 Stn Prov Gov't
Victoria, BC V8W 9V1

Re: Environmental Assessment – Blackwater Gold Project

Dear Shelley:

Please accept this letter as an official written response, on behalf of the District of Vanderhoof, relative to the draft APPLICATION INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS (AIR) regarding the above mentioned.

The District of Vanderhoof supports this project and offers the following specific reasons to our endorsement:

In 2013, **New Gold Inc.** contracted **Context Research Ltd.** to prepare and launch a PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PLAN. This document is readily available to all affected parties and clearly articulates the five pillars of the Environmental Assessment (EA) process and the subsequent valued components of each pillar. It also clearly defines the process relative to Application Information Requirements (AIR) pre and post public consultation. In addition, **New Gold Inc.** is committed to alignment with ISO 26000 (guidance of social responsibility) and Mining Association of Canada's sustainable mining best practices.

In terms of the five pillars of the EA process, considerable time and effort has been dedicated to educating the public in terms of Social, Economic, Environmental, Heritage, and Health assessments. Several meetings were held throughout our community as well as surrounding jurisdictions affected by this application. During these community and public discussions, **New Gold Inc.** provided ample evidence of proposed mitigation practices and is committed to monitor residual and cumulative effects of the Blackwater Gold project. **Context Research Ltd.** and **New Gold Inc.** provided detailed studies relative to meeting and, in some cases, exceeding AIR requirements as part of the EA process. Examples include an HR strategy for staff capital/recruitment, a collaborative approach with Dr. Shandro (UVIC) to address social implications of resource extraction, and hosting 'community leader's forums' addressing First Nations opportunities and regional economic development initiatives.

The District of Vanderhoof strongly encourages the Environmental Assessment Office to approve the AIR requirements and move toward the 'application review stage' of the EA process.

Regards,

Mayor Gerry Thiessen

c.c. District of Vanderhoof Council

www.vanderhoof.ca • info@district.vanderhoof.ca
160 Connaught Street, PO Box 900, Vanderhoof, BC V0J 3A0 • Phone 250•567•4711 • Fax 250•567•9169

John Blackwell - Moose Lake, British Columbia

Moose Lake Lodge
Box 3310
Anahim Lake, BC V0L 1C0

November 8, 2013

Shelley Murphy
Executive Project Director
Environmental Assessment Office
PO Box 9426 Station Provincial Government
Victoria, BC V8W 9V1

RE: Environmental Assessment of the Proposed Blackwater Gold Project

Dear Shelley,

Moose Lake Lodge is a family owned and operated business that began in 1969. The business owns a Guide Outfitting Tenure (600668), a Grazing Tenure (RAN077199), Angling Guide Licenses, Park Use Permits, and 1,280 acres of private property. The headquarters of the business is at Moose Lake, approximately 30 kilometers West of the center of operations for Blackwater Gold, while some of the tenures are much nearer the operations.

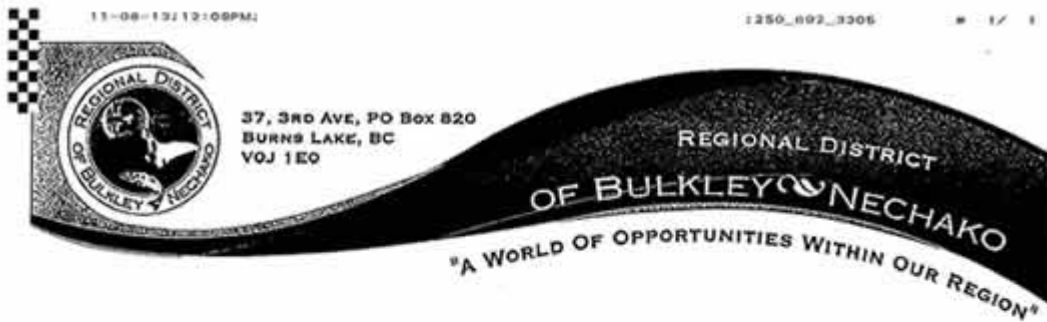
We are not opposed to the development of the mine at Mt. Davidson. The economic benefits to the area are many and outweigh the environmental risks if the environmental issues are dealt with properly.

The majority of the economic benefits will be enjoyed by those persons living and doing business 110 to 160 kilometers away from the actual mine, while those persons living and doing business much closer to the mine will receive the most adverse impacts. We would like to see the 25 kilometer regional study area expanded to include Moose Lake because Moose Lake is the hub of our business that depends on all our tenures which are in the footprint of Blackwater Gold. Exploration activities, drilling, new access, etc. are impacting our business and if the exploration develops into mining in the exploration areas it will further impact

our business. I would like to be involved in all studies regarding the environmental impacts of exploration and mining.

Thank you.

Regional District of Bulkley & Nechako - Burns Lake, BC



November 8, 2013

Sent via facsimile
(250) 387-2208

BC Environmental Assessment Office

RE: Blackwater Gold Project

In principle, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako is in support of the Blackwater Gold Project. We look forward to receipt and review of the Environmental Assessment Application information, and subsequent discussions relating to that review process.

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors would like to take this opportunity to recognize the good communications that have been developed between the Regional District representatives and Kathie LaForge, Communications Manager for the Blackwater Gold Project.

Yours truly,

Bill Miller
Chair

cc: Kathie LaForge, Community Manager, New Gold

MUNICIPALITIES:	ELECTORAL AREAS:	INQUIRIES@RDSN.BC.CA
SHIVERS	A - SHIVERS RURAL	WWW.RDSN.BC.CA
VANDERHOOF	B - BURNS LAKE RURAL	PH: 250-692-3195
HOUSTON	C - FORT ST. JAMES RURAL	FX: 250-692-3305
BURNS LAKE	D - FRASER LAKE RURAL	TF: 800-320-3339
	E - OOTSA LAKE/FRASER LAKE	
	F - VANDERHOOF RURAL	
	G - HOUSTON RURAL	

November 7, 2013

Laidman Lake Ecolodge - Carp, Ontario



Laidman Lake Ecolodge
 3733 Carp Road
 Carp, Ontario
 K0A 1L0
 PH: (613) 839-3168
 info@laidmanlakeecolodge.com

Shelley Murphy
 Executive Project Director
 Environmental Assessment Office
 PO Box 9426 Station Provincial Government
 Victoria, BC
 V8W 9V1

October 23, 2013

RE: Environmental Assessment of the Proposed Blackwater Gold Project

Dear Shelley,

Laidman Lake Eco-lodge is a remote 70 acre wilderness retreat that flies customers from Vancouver to the interior of central British Columbia to experience high end "off the grid" accommodations and experiences. Customers have the opportunity to participate in such activities as guided heli-ski, kayak, canoe, hiking, fishing and sightseeing or just relax and take in the onsite seclusion and activities.

The lodge also serves as primary residence for me and my family during the spring, summer and fall seasons.

The Laidman Lake Ecolodge is well within the regional study area of the Blackwater Gold Project and as such we request that we be consulted and personally engaged in discussions as the project progresses through the various stages of approvals.

We also request that our property be specifically included in all impact assessment studies. We do not oppose the project as described in the document titled "New Gold Inc. Blackwater Gold Project, British Columbia Project Description Summary" dated October 24, 2012, so long as the impact assessment studies conclude that the proposed Black Water Gold Project will not now, or in the future, result in adverse impacts to the operations of the Laidman Lake Ecolodge nor the quiet enjoyment of our residence located there.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our comments.

Sincerely,

William Karson

Proprietor
 Laidman Lake Ecolodge

Avaison Management Services Ltd. - Vanderhoof, British Columbia

November 7, 2013
 Environmental Assessment Office
 2nd Floor 836 Yates St
 PO Box 9426 Stn Pro Govt
 Victoria BC V8W 9V1



RE: Environmental Assessment -Blackwater Project DAIR

Attention: Shelly Murphy

Avison Management Services Ltd. has operated in the Vanderhoof Forest District for the past 33 years. During that time we have gained an extensive knowledge of the land base, its resources and stakeholders. As members of the community, environmental consultants and business people we have had numerous experiences over the past 30 years with different organizations and proponents of various projects. Our experience with NewGold to date has been very positive on all levels as they have made substantial effort in community engagement, communication, and environmental excellence.

In our opinion New Gold has exceeded the AIR requirements and has communicated those requirements effectively through various public open houses and Community Liaison Committee meetings. New Gold has also provided access to its baseline data collection results and project intentions in an open and engaging manner.

We are also impressed at the level of environmental stewardship that New Gold has delivered on, during the past 3 years. It has been at a level never seen by stakeholders in the Vanderhoof Forest District.

New Gold's mission to engage local companies with employment opportunities has been incomparable. The engagement of the First Nations in our area is also been successful as nearly 25% of the employment onsite is First Nations.

The continued success of the NewGold Blackwater project will provide growth and diversity for our communities and region and we strongly encourage the EAO to approve the DAIR.

Yours truly,

Stuart Sinclair, RPF, MBA
 President
 Avison Management Services Ltd.
 Vanderhoof, BC

November 6, 2013

City of Quesnel - Quesnel, British Columbia



CITY OF
QUESNEL
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

410 KINCHANT STREET
QUESNEL, B.C. V2J 7J5
PHONE (250) 992-2111
FAX (250) 992-2206

November 5, 2013

Shelley Murphy, Executive Project Director
Environmental Assessment Office
PO Box 9426 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9V1

RE: Letter of Support for the New Gold Blackwater Project

Dear Ms. Murphy;

On behalf of Quesnel City Council, I wish to extend support for the New Gold Blackwater Project.

At a Regular meeting of Council, held November 4, 2013, Quesnel City Council resolved to forward our endorsement of the proposed Blackwater Project.

In consultation with the Quesnel Community Economic Development Corporation, we note that the Blackwater Project will have significant economic benefits to Quesnel and area. New Gold anticipates 1600 construction jobs and 500 operational jobs and has committed to hire locally first. Through QCEDC's participation with the Community Liaison Committee, they have attested to New Gold's commitment to the environment, First Nations and local communities.

The City of Quesnel is excited to see this new initiative move forward and diversify our economy and region.

Office of Mayor
& Council
250.991.7477

Mayor
Mary Sjostrom

Councillors
John Brisco
Mike Cave
Ed Coleman
Scott Elliott
Laurey-Anne
Roodenburg
Sushil Thapar

Executive Asst.
Rhys Hartley

The City of Quesnel will provide its residents with an outstanding
quality of life in a vibrant, prosperous, diversified community,
achieved through a process of public consultation and trust.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office at 250.991-7477.

Sincerely,

Mayor Mary Sjöström
City of Quesnel
cc

Email: csed.minister@gov.bc.ca
Coralee.oakes@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable Coralee Oakes
Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development
M.L.A. Cariboo-North

Email: mem.minister@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable Bill Bennett
Minister of Energy and Mines and Minister Responsible for Core Review

Email: env.minister@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable Mary Polak
Minister of Environment

Email: arichmond@cariboord.bc.ca

Al Richmond, Chair
Cariboo Regional District

Email: igorlin@gmail.com

Office of Mayor
& Council
250.991.7477

Mayor
Mary Sjöström

Councillors
John Brisco
Mike Cave
Ed Coleman
Scott Elliott
Laurey-Anne
Roodenburg
Sushil Thapar

Executive Asst.
Rhya Hartley

Jim Gorsline, Chair
Quesnel Community and Economic Development Corporation

Email: Robert.Gallagher@newgold.com

Bob Gallagher, President and CEO
New Gold Inc.

The City of Quesnel will provide its residents with an outstanding
quality of life in a vibrant, prosperous, diversified, community,
achieved through a process of public consultation and trust.

Quesnel Community and Economic Development Corporation (QCEDC) - Quesnel, British Columbia



November 4, 2013

Shelley Murphy, Executive Project Director
Environmental Assessment Office
PO Box 9426 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9V1

RE: Letter of Support for the New Gold Blackwater Project

The Quesnel Community and Economic Development Corporation (QCEDC) supports the New Gold Blackwater Project.

The Blackwater Project will have a significant, positive impact on the regional economy. With 1,500 peak construction jobs and 500 operational jobs anticipated, New Gold has committed to hiring locally first. New Gold's thorough detail in addressing environmental and social concerns has been impressive. Through our participation with the Community Liaison Committee, QCEDC has witnessed first hand, New Gold's commitment to the environment, First Nations and local communities.

Having reviewed the document, QCEDC would like to recommend the EAO approves the Application Information Requirements submitted by New Gold for the Blackwater Project.

QCEDC is a wholly owned subsidiary of the City of Quesnel and works to facilitate economic, social and environmental wealth for all residents. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office

With sincere thanks,

Jim Gorsline
Chair, QCEDC

Quesnel Community and Economic Development Corporation
339A Reid Street Quesnel BC V2J 2M5
Tel: 250.992.3522 Web: www.quesnelinfo.com

November 05, 2013

Denis and June Wood - Vanderhoof, BC

British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office,
P.O. Box 9426 Stn Prov Govt,
Victoria, B.C.
V8W 9V1

Attention Shelley Murphy, Executive Project Director

Re: New Gold Blackwater Gold Project

Having attended several meetings with New Gold both at their offices and at their open houses over the past year or so we have collected considerable information about the Blackwater Gold Project. The issue which concerns us most is the proposed location of the power line between the B.C. Hydro Provincial grid south of Endako and the proposed project site. To us some portions of the proposed route are entirely unacceptable and we will attempt to explain why and offer a solution.

The route of the proposed right-of-way runs roughly east from the Endako sub-station, then south-east toward the Nechako River. From what we have learned, most of this part of the proposed route would cross clear-cut crown land and follow existing forest access roads. As it approaches the Nechako River crossing and Greer Mountain, the terrain becomes more remote and wilderness in nature. After crossing Greer Creek the proposed power line heads in a more southerly direction through mainly wilderness, around Hobson Mountain toward the East Swanson Forest Service Road (FSR) which it follows until intersecting the Lucas 500 FSR. From there it travels south-eastward crossing Big Bend creek and eventually meeting the Kluskus FSR. It is about this portion of the proposed route that we are most concerned. Our main concern is the entirely unnecessary alteration to current wilderness areas as well as the areas that will become forested again once the trees planted to replace the ones logged begin to mature. Our second concern is the proximity of the proposed right-of-way to our home on the Kenney Dam Road at km. 59 and to our cabin on property we own on the Lucas 500 FSR near km. 7. Our third concern is over the location of the proposed crossing of the Nechako River and the effect it will have on the viewscapes enjoyed by those using the river for canoeing and boating as well as the creation of additional access to the river.

Information from New Gold indicates that the north-west part of their proposed route will cross crown land that is already logged and contains existing logging roads connected to the Holy Cross FSR. While this may be true today it will not be in the future. The logged blocks (and they are almost continuous in the north-west section) are all replanted. Once the new trees reach a certain size the logging roads will be deactivated by the Forest Licensee and the "free to grow" forest will become the responsibility of the provincial government. The new forest will then take on the characteristics of a natural forest, thus benefiting the entire ecosystem. A 40 metre swath cut through the middle of the wilderness along with the permanent access trails required for its maintenance will have very negative impacts. Then there is the task of crossing the Nechako River in an area that is very remote and has little if any access at the moment. Efforts to prevent large scale logging in the Greer Mountain, Greer Creek, and Hobson Mountain landscapes have been successful. The viewscapes from the river itself provide an almost totally natural vista, something we want to continue to see. In addition, the structure itself would diminish the natural experience for canoeists and boaters. A power line over the river at this point is neither acceptable nor necessary. Heading south around Hobson Mountain exposes mainly wild areas to the disturbance caused by the power line construction and permanent access / maintenance trails.

One of the most obvious results of the proposal will be the effect on our ungulate populations. A report produced in May 2012 by the Ministry of Forests, Land and Natural Resource Operations states that moose populations in the Omineca Region have declined by 50% since 2005. This supports what we who live in the region have been telling the authorities for years — to no avail.

The report outlines potential factors for the decline including poaching, increased access, predator populations and activities that cause changes to environmental conditions such as timber salvaging (logging) and the cumulative impacts of one or some or all of these factors. Increased logging destroys opportunities for wildlife to hide. The proposed power line will only exacerbate this situation. An additional 133 km. long, 40 metres wide swath cut through the landscape will provide continual access to poachers and hunters most of whom use 4-wheel-drive all terrain vehicles. In addition snowmobiles will compact the snow in winter allowing wolves and other predators easier access to their prey. All these factors combined create an impossible situation for our remaining wildlife populations.

The portion of the right-of-way south of the Nechako River corridor has a very high potential for wild fire. The Greer Valley fire of June, 2010 illustrates how volatile the forest in the vicinity of the proposed route is. A wildfire in this area would be very hard to bring under control before it consumes several kms. of the transmission structure. We understand that the plan is to use wooden power poles. The very fact that access is available to those who may not need to be there increases the risk of human started fire. Summer time lightning storms are very common and we have been lucky to date that lightning has not caused more fires similar to the Kenney Dam fire of 2004 or the Binta Lake fire of July/August, 2010.

Over the years (sooner or later) there may be those who see a power line right-of-way in such a remote place as an opportunity for sabotage. These people could do considerable damage in a short period of time with a very high likelihood of not being caught.

All of these risks are real and the environmental impacts are avoidable if an alternative route for the transmission line were chosen. This is possible, but New Gold has told us (and their information indicates) that B.C. Hydro will only allow them to access the provincial electricity grid at the substation south of Endako. B.C. Hydro will sell huge amounts of energy to New Gold for the operation of their proposed Blackwater Gold project. As such, B.C. Hydro needs to show some willingness for flexibility.

From Endako the proposed power line runs east for about 20 kms. following a right-of-way which appears to run roughly parallel to and 3 kms. south of the existing provincial grid towers and the adjacent three-pole / timber structures that support power lines that serve the needs of Fraser Lake, Fort Fraser, Plateaus Mills at Engen and Vanderhoof. The three-pole structures end at the sub station about 5 kms. south of Vanderhoof. The transmission line then turns southward across mostly logged-off country until it crosses the Nechako River. From there it traces eastward across the Kenney Dam Road and Greer Creek before heading south, then around Hobson Mountain, before finally intersecting the Kluskus Forest Service Road near Big Bend Creek.

There seems to be a recurring trend of almost every resource extracting project that we see in B.C. That is more and separate access corridors, many parallel and only a short distance apart. Once again we see the same thing with this proposal. Highway 16 and the C.N.R. railway cross the Nechako River near Fort Fraser within sight of each other. The B.C. Hydro provincial grid right-of-way crosses further upstream and now we have a proposal which places a new and separate crossing even further upstream.

In January 1997, the provincial government approved the Vanderhoof Land and Resource Management Plan. The LRMP designated the territory being crossed by the proposed power line as the Upper Nechako River Resource Management Zone (RMZ), providing for the maintenance of the fisheries, wildlife, scenic views and cultural values of the Nechako River corridor. The Recreation and Tourism Interests section lists the Objective: maintain visual quality along the Kenney Dam Road and the Nechako River. Further; the Strategy to achieve this objective is:

- Manage the Kenney Dam Road as a visually sensitive area
- Manage the Nechako River as a scenic area

Multiple power line right-of-ways across the river and over the Kenney Dam Road do not achieve the LRMP's Intent, Interest, Objective or Strategy for the Upper Nechako River RMZ.

A logical solution to this very unwise choice of right-of-way is to use the existing three-pole / timber structures to deliver power to a junction point in the vicinity of Plateau Mills near Engen. From there it should be easy and less expensive to construct the new power line right-of-way following the Kluskus FSR to Big Bend Creek. We are told the Kluskus FSR right-of-way should be at least 75 metres wide, 30 metres wider than the proposed right-of-way through the wild or semi - wild and remote country that we have described.

Our alternative proposal for the route of the transmission line will:

1. Eliminate the need to clear and provide access to what looks like 100 kms. of right-of-way through logged and replanted cut-blocks or wilderness land.
2. Save the need for supplying and installing power poles for about 50 kms. by using the existing secondary power line structures which run parallel to the provincial grid towers between Endako and Engen
3. Provide a platform from which to work while building about 70 kms. of new power line adjacent to the existing Kluskus FSR
4. Eliminate the risk of losing large portions of the power line in the event of wild fire as protection will be more readily available along the Kluskus FSR
5. Reduce the likelihood of damage to the power line by sabotage as it would be within sight of the Kluskus FSR and observable 24 hours a day by staff and personnel travelling to and from the proposed project.
6. Preserve a large amount of wilderness land for future generation.
7. Preserve wildlife habitat.
8. Place all power line crossings of the Nechako River together, minimizing the visual impact of multiple crossings of power lines, railways and Highway 16.

Our questions to you, the Environment Assessment Office, to New Gold and to B.C. Hydro are:

1. How much electrical energy will be transmitted and consumed by the proposed project and what will the cost to New Gold be for this power? We are thinking of the total numbers of megawatts and the price per megawatt.
2. What issues (beyond, perhaps, the need to install heavier cable on the section between

Endako and Engen) prevent the use of this second power line to transmit the power needed by New Gold back as far as the Engen and then on to the new transmission line along the Kluskus Road to the proposed project?

3. Will New Gold and B.C. Hydro meet and resolve the problems that prevent using the existing infrastructure to transmit power from Endako to Engen?

New Gold says it wants "Social License" to pursue this project. As resident land owners in the area to be affected and as citizens of B.C., we request that a meeting between New Gold and B.C. Hydro take place to resolve these issues.

We look forward to your response to these very important questions and would be happy to discuss these matters further at your convenience.

Yours truly,

Denis and June Wood

November 01, 2013

Personal Information Withheld - Prince George, BC

November 1, 2013

BC Environmental Assessment Office
PO Box 9426, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, British Columbia V8W 9V1

Attn: Shelley Murphy, Executive Project Director

Dear Ms Murphy:

RE: Blackwater Gold Project- Application Information Requirements

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the Environmental Assessment Application Information Requirements (AIR) on the proposed Blackwater Gold Project of New Gold Inc. am familiar with the comprehensive and stringent review processes for industrial projects required by the Canadian and British Columbia governments as required by law.

Having reviewed the AIR as proposed by New Gold Inc., I am comfortable that the company has carefully considered all aspects of the proposed mine and its potential impacts on the environmental, economic, social, heritage and health factors. I recognize the AIR is not the finalization of the EA process, but rather its beginning and I am personally and professionally comfortable that the subject areas of study as proposed in the AIR will enable a thorough and exhaustive review of the Blackwater Gold Project.

New Gold Inc. has demonstrated in its other mining operations in British Columbia and elsewhere in the world, that it takes its corporate responsibility to the environment, health and social well-being very seriously. I have every confidence that the Blackwater project will be managed in a manner that is absolutely consistent with their existing standards, and New Gold's desire to ensure that all operations are developed, run and eventually closed with world class standards that British Columbians can be proud of.

I would like to commend New Gold Inc. in their diligence in developing and proposing the AIR for the Environmental Assessment of the Blackwater Gold Project. Their commitment to ensure the Project is comprehensively studied will enable informed decision making for a project that can bring sustained and needed economic benefits to region that requires development without undue environmental or social consequence and/or impacts.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to comment. I will mail the original copy of this letter via conventional mail service as well as this email submission.

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