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About the Review Board

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board is a co-management board responsible for the environmental impact assessment process in the Mackenzie Valley.

In 1998, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act established the Review Board as an independent administrative tribunal. Although the federal government enacted this piece of legislation, the Act itself resulted from completed land claims in the Northwest Territories. This legislation gives aboriginal people of the Mackenzie Valley a greater say in resource development and management.

The Review Board consists of nine members, all appointed by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The chairperson is typically appointed after being nominated by the other Review Board members. The other eight Board members are appointed in equal numbers from nominations submitted by the federal and territorial governments and from aboriginal land claimant organizations. As a result, the Review Board is a co-management board, comprised of an equal number of aboriginal land claimant nominees and government nominees.

The Review Board's vision for itself is excellence and timeliness in environmental impact assessment within a co-management system that balances diverse values to protect the Mackenzie Valley for present and future generations.

About the Process

There are [three stages](#) in the environmental impact assessment process in the Mackenzie Valley.

1. Preliminary screening

All proposed developments that require a license, permit, or other authorization must apply for and go through a preliminary screening. A land and water board, such as the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board, or other regulating authority, manages this process. Preliminary screening is a quick review of a proposed development's application to decide if the development might have significant adverse impacts on the environment, or might cause public concern. If so, the application is referred to the second stage - environmental assessment, handled by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board. If not, then the application can proceed to the permitting and licensing process, carried out by the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board or other regulator.

2. Environmental assessment

All proposed developments go through a preliminary screening, and only a small number of them must go through an environmental assessment. The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board conducts these assessments which are a more thorough study to decide if the development is likely to have significant adverse impacts on the environment, or likely to cause public concern. If the assessment shows this to be so, the Review Board recommends to the federal Minister for Indian Affairs and Northern Development one of the following: a) the project can proceed to regulatory permitting and licensing as is; b) the project can proceed to regulatory permitting and licensing provided some mitigative measures recommended by the Review Board as a result of the assessment are in place; or c) the project should be rejected. Alternatively, the Review Board or the federal and responsible ministers may order an environmental impact review for a much more detailed review by an independent panel.

3. Environmental impact review

An environmental impact review follows an environmental assessment when the Review Board or the federal responsible ministers deem a more comprehensive examination of a proposed development is needed. The review is conducted by an independent panel, which may consist of both Review Board members and non-Review Board members, all appointed by the Review Board. The environmental impact review provides a more focused study of the issues raised during the environmental assessment.

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