

Minister of the Environment

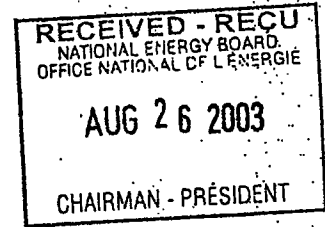


Ministre de l'Environnement

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H3

AUG 21 2003

Mr. Ken Vollman
Chairman
National Energy Board
444 Seventh Avenue South West
Room 4047
Calgary AB T2P 0X8



Dear Mr. Vollman:

In response to your letter of July 17, I am referring the Mackenzie Gas Project to a review panel pursuant to section 29 of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.

The Project's referral is an important step in establishing a rigorous and efficient environmental assessment process for the entire Project, as contemplated in the June 2002 *Cooperation Plan for the Environmental Impact Assessment and Regulatory Review of a Northern Gas Pipeline Project through the Northwest Territories*. In the near future, other steps pursuant to the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement* and the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* will be taken with respect to this Project.

I will await the outcome of these steps before establishing any formal process for conducting the environmental assessment review. I have asked the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency to follow up with your Board and other responsible authorities following the completion of these steps, and to inform me of further actions.

I have also informed the Honourable Robert G. Thibault, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Honourable Robert D. Nault, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Honourable Herb Dhaliwal, Minister of Natural Resources, and Ms. Suzanne Hurtubise, Deputy Minister of Environment Canada, of my referral of the Mackenzie Gas Project to a review panel.

Please accept my best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

David Anderson, P.C., M.P.

Canada

