



Roles & Responsibilities



Vision Statement for the Environmental Quality Committee

An Environmental Quality Committee, composed of trusted and knowledgeable people each nominated by his/her community, is a bridge between northerners, government and the uranium mining industry.

A bridge built upon a solid foundation
of mutual trust and respect.

An Environmental Quality Committee is not vested with regulatory responsibilities, but rather, is structured to provide a forum which will ensure the consideration of the concerns and recommendations of northerners on the way in which uranium development occurs in northern Saskatchewan.

Through informed dialogue and communication, government, the uranium mining industry and the people of the north, together, will strive to ensure that all uranium mining activity takes place in a manner which considers the needs and aspirations of those people most directly affected, the people of the north.

Environmental Quality Committees and the Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat

How they came to be

Northern input into policy decisions

In the mid-1990s the need was recognized for the people of Saskatchewan, particularly those who reside in the north, to be reassured that uranium mines are operating in compliance with all applicable federal and provincial regulations, and that northern economic benefits are being maximized through appropriate hiring practices and policies related to the enhanced capture of business opportunities.

The Government of Saskatchewan also realized the need to establish a mechanism to better ensure consideration of the concerns of its northern citizens when making regulatory and policy decisions regarding uranium developments in the north.

A bridge

There was therefore a need to establish a bridge between northerners, government and the uranium mining industry, a bridge based on mutual trust, respect, and appropriate consultation and involvement, in order to improve the level of communication with, and input from, northern residents.

The Environmental Quality Committee (EQC) is intended to provide such a bridge. The Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat is the support structure for that bridge.

Agency established

In "The Government's Position on Proposed Mining Developments in Northern Saskatchewan" (December 1993), Saskatchewan committed to the establishment of a central support agency responsible for collecting and communicating government's monitoring efforts (the NMMS) and to support regionally-based committees composed of representatives from impact communities (the EQCs).

We believe that northerners, through their EQC members, are in the best position to advise government, through the NMMS, on appropriate means of consulting and involving northerners so they can better understand and influence the way in which the uranium mining industry is monitored and regulated.

No regulatory role

Environmental Quality Committees can neither interfere with the operation of a particular mine, nor attempt to formulate policy. Their function is primarily to receive, evaluate and transmit information and recommendations in an understandable and unbiased fashion. In this way, they exert influence on the way in which development occurs.

NMMS commitment

The Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat commits, as a minimum, to produce or gather and provide to the EQCs information on industry monitoring programs, regulatory requirements, or other pertinent information which is likely to impact northerners.

The NMMS also commits to communicate such information in a timely fashion, to allow sufficient time for northerners to review the information, and respond if desired with queries, concerns and suggested improvements.

Sample collection

The NMMS will advise the EQCs of any off-site natural resource samples being collected by regulatory agencies including water, fish, soils, riparian life, (flora or fauna) prior to commencing such collection. Where appropriate, northerners from the collection area will be actively involved in these activities after adequate explanation and training.

Community meetings

The NMMS is committed to receiving concerns, comments and suggestions from northern communities. This will be done not only through the EQCs, but through community gatherings, meetings and other opportunities for northern participation which are mutually agreed upon and arranged through the EQC representatives.

When requested by a northern impact community, representatives of the NMMS will meet directly with the Mayor and Council of a northern municipality, or the Chief and Council of a northern First Nation, in order to better explain environmental protection and worker health and safety monitoring programs, or any other topic specified.

Reporting

The NMMS will document the outcome of all its consultation and involvement processes, and forward copies to EQC representatives, northern municipalities and First Nations, and any other party or interest identified by a northern representative of an EQC, northern municipality or First Nation.

The Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat will respond to all reasonable queries by ensuring the communication of scientific results and explanations to EQCs in a clear, concise and timely manner.

“North” and “northerner” as defined by the Human Resource Development Agreements.

Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat

Located in La Ronge with a toll free number, 1-800-577-2668

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Administration/Coordination

- To provide administrative support for the EQC.
- To act as a facilitator, to organize and execute regular meetings of the EQC.
- To coordinate mine site tours for EQC members, in conjunction with regulatory agencies
- To coordinate the attendance of regulatory agencies and industry representatives at EQC meetings as required, to address issues or questions raised by the EQC.

2. Informational

- To provide information to, and answer questions from, the EQC and the general public
- To identify research needs through working with the EQC
- To compile statistics
- To publish and distribute monitoring information in a usable format
- To publish an annual summary report on NMMS/EQC activities
- To organize and produce educational workshops on issues related to northern mineral development
- To distribute information on all aspects of provincial regulation and monitoring of uranium mining, whether bio-physical, surface lease requirements, or social and economic developments.

3. Linking with regulators and other agencies

- To refer EQC and general public inquiries to the appropriate regulatory agency and industry respondent, and tracking these inquiries to ensure a response.
- To maintain links with agencies such as, but not limited to:
 - Atomic Energy Control Board
 - Saskatchewan Environment & Resource Management
 - Saskatchewan Energy and Mines
 - Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training
 - Saskatchewan Labour
 - Saskatchewan Water Corporation
 - Environment Canada
 - Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
 - Cogema Resources Inc.
 - Cameco Corporation

Structure

1. Membership

- Member departments of the Secretariat are as follows:
 - Saskatchewan Northern Affairs
 - Saskatchewan Environment

- Saskatchewan Industry & Resources, Metallic Minerals Branch
 - Saskatchewan Learning
 - Saskatchewan Health
 - Northern Health Authorities, Population Health Unit
 - Saskatchewan Health
 - Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
- A permanent representative will be designated by each department
 - A representative absent from three consecutive meetings without just cause will be deemed to have resigned, and a replacement will be sought from the respective department.

2. **Management**

- The Manager is located in La Ronge, and affiliated with Saskatchewan Northern Affairs.

Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat Chairperson

Roles and Responsibilities

The primary role of the Chairperson of the Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat (NMMS) is to preside over Secretariat meetings, to encourage the participation of departmental representatives, and to ensure that adequate, relevant discussion takes place to fully address the agenda of the meeting.

More specifically, the role of the Chairperson will include, but not be limited to:

Operations and Management

- Ensuring the development of operational plans and management systems to attain operational performance objectives, and monitor results
- Ensuring that proper financial and reporting systems are developed and implemented to meet the financial management and reporting requirements as specified under the Financial Administrations Act of the province
- Directing the manager and any contract staff in the execution of their responsibilities and duties in the fulfillment of the NMMS/EQC mandate and attainment of the objectives of the NMMS/EQCs.
- In cooperation with the manager, ensuring all decisions for action agreed to by the Secretariat are acted upon in a timely and effective manner.
- Acting as signatory on official papers produced on the Secretariat's behalf

Meetings

- Reviewing and approving, in advance of the NMMS meetings, the proposed agenda as prepared by the NMMS Manager
- In communication with the Manager, ensuring that all needed material such as summaries, reports and/or correspondence are available or have been distributed prior to the commencement of the meetings
- Act as presiding officer over NMMS meetings, moderating the discussions and advocating for adherence to NMMS policies and mandate.
- Call the meeting to order on time, announcing and proceeding with the order of business as it appears on the agenda.
- On behalf of the Secretariat, ensuring timely distribution of accurate minutes to members

Communications

- Ensuring the development of a communications strategy that will effectively realize the mandate of the NMMS/EQCs.
- In a timely manner, informing ministers and department senior management of all important issues and concerns arising from the activities of the NMMS and EQCs.
- Acting as spokesperson for the NMMS with the media or at public meetings when required.

Environmental Quality Committee Member

Roles & Responsibilities

The primary role of each community representative to an Environmental Quality Committee (EQC) will include, but not be limited to:

Meetings

- Attending, actively participating in, and representing his/her community at, regular EQC meetings and NMMS/EQC-sponsored events in his/her impact community, in other communities, or at the mine sites.
- Reporting to regular EQC meetings information on community issues, and community-based recommendations related to uranium industry activities.

Community Activities

- To provide a direct link between the community and the EQC, and to help increase the awareness and understanding of northerners regarding:
 - Monitoring activities surrounding the uranium industry
 - The role of government and industry in protecting the environment, ensuring the health and safety of workers and the public, and improving the distribution of benefits amongst northern residents.
- Talking to community residents, in order to bring to the EQC any concerns on issues related to uranium industry activities, or any requests for information, meetings or activities in the community.
- Reporting to his/her community, in a timely and regular manner, on meetings of, decisions made by, and/or actions taken by, the appropriate Environmental Quality Committee.

Impact Community Participating in Environmental Quality Committee

Roles and Responsibilities

The primary role of an impact community participating in an Environmental Quality committee will include, but not be limited to:

Nominating an EQC Representative

- Ensuring the nomination and faithful participation of a suitable representative, and alternate representatives(s) to the Environmental Quality Committee (EQC) of which the community is a member.

Assisting with distribution of information in the community, by:

- Ensuring support within the community and among local interest groups for the education of residents about the operation and regulation of the uranium industry in northern Saskatchewan
- Providing appropriate meetings and places where information can be presented and community input sought on various issues surrounding the northern uranium industry.

Helping the EQC member represent the community, by:

- Providing the EQC representative with input which will help him/her determine northerners' views on how government and industry monitor uranium mining. This will help the EQCs evaluate proposed changes in activities or monitoring programs.
- Providing the EQC representative with ideas and suggestions for changes in regulations or policy which would improve northerners' understanding of environmental, health and safety, and socio-economic issues associated with uranium development in northern Saskatchewan
- Facilitating the EQC representative's participation in mine monitoring activities, including mine tours, sampling procedures and special initiatives.
- Facilitating the EQC representative's participation in any strategic training and employment support programs.

Communities Represented on the EQC

These are impact communities as named in the
Human Resource Development Agreements
for the various mine sites.

Athabasca Subcommittee

Black Lake Dene Nation
Camsell Portage
Fond du Lac Dene Nation
Stony Rapids
Uranium City
Wollaston (Hatchet Lake Dene Nation)

West Side Subcommittee

Beauval
Birch Narrows First Nation (Turnor Lake)
Buffalo Narrows
Buffalo River Dene Nation (Dillon)
English River First nation (Patuanak)
Green Lake
Ile a la Crosse
Jans Bay
La Loche
Michel Village
Patuanak
St. George's Hill

South Central Subcommittee

Air Ronge
Beauval
Brabant Lake
Buffalo Narrows
Cumberland House
Cumberland House Cree Nation
Denare Beach
Green Lake
Ile a la Crosse
La Loche
La Ronge
Lac La Ronge Indian Band
Montreal Lake Cree Nation
Patuanak
Pinehouse
Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Sandy Bay
Sandy Bay
Weyakwin