



Arrowsmith Watersheds Coalition Society

At email address below.

Review of Environmental Assessment Processes
Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
160 Elgin Street, 22nd Floor, Ottawa ON K1A 0H3
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Sent via email. Signed copy by Post mail.

July 20, 2016

Re: Comments on environmental assessment processes: Draft Terms of Reference for Expert Panel

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the draft Terms of Reference for the Expert Panel that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change will establish to review environmental assessment processes associated with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 (CEAA 2012).

Canada needs substantial legislative changes that usher in a visionary new approach to assessing the potential benefits, harms, risks and uncertainties of all activities that might alter the environment.

Our suggestions for the preparation of the Terms of Reference for an Expert Panel to review Environmental Assessment are:

1. Ensuring that the Scope of Review is broad enough to identify strategic-level solutions to strengthening environmental assessment, and not merely incremental improvements to project-level assessment;
2. Recognition in the Terms of Reference of the need for the Panel to explore and define the goals and purpose of modern-day environmental assessment to set the context for the new process;
3. Provide for the commissioning of discussion papers on the best available information on leading-edge assessment approaches, examine state-of-the-art in other jurisdictions;

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4. A requirement in the Terms of Reference that the Panel report on how it considers comments received;
5. Designation in the Terms of Reference of a public review and comment period on the draft Panel report, and that adequate time be allowed for public review of the draft; and
6. Direction in the Terms of Reference for the Panel report to include specific and detailed recommendations for any needed legislative changes, as well as where changes should occur in policy or guidance.

Thank you for the opportunity to present these recommendations.

Sincerely,

Signed copy by Post mail.

Michael C. Jessen, P.Eng.
Treasurer, Arrowsmith Watersheds Coalition Society

cc. Directors, Arrowsmith Watersheds Coalition Society