

2006 03 21

Department of Environment and Conservation
Environmental Assessment Division

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT BULLETIN

Environment and Conservation Minister Clyde Jackman has announced the following event relative to Part 10 Environmental Assessment of the Environmental Protection Act.

UNDERTAKING REGISTERED:

Long Harbour Nickel Commercial Processing Plant
Proponent: Voisey's Bay Nickel Company Limited

(Reg. 1243)

The proponent proposes to construct and operate a hydrometallurgical processing plant ("Hydromet Plant") to produce 50,000 tonnes annually of finished nickel product and associated copper and cobalt products. It is proposed to locate the Hydromet Plant on the south side of Long Harbour, Placentia Bay. The Hydromet Plant will require 65 hectares plus 85 hectares for pipelines and residue ponds. Construction at the site would require upgrades to the port of the former phosphorus plant owned by ERCO / Albright and Wilson Americas. Approximately 3.7 million cubic metres of clearing, grubbing, and rock excavation would be necessary. A 3 kilometre long road would be constructed from the port to connect the main plant preparation and processing buildings. Other construction would include: administrative offices and laboratories; 2 kilometre pipeline from Rattling Brook Big Pond for supply of 600 cubic metres per hour of process water; 3.8 kilometre pipeline to Sandy Pond for the disposal of 375,000 tonnes per year of neutralized slurry residue. Treated effluents totaling 3 million cubic metres per year will be discharged to the marine environment.

A Hydromet Plant is planned to be constructed if it is shown to be technically and economically feasible. Alternatively, a nickel-bearing matte plant ("Matte Plant") is also proposed. Final selection between the two processing technologies will be made in 2008. The Matte Plant will require 65 hectares plus 40 hectares for sub-aerial disposal of gypsum residue; 106,000 tonnes per year of waste gypsum slurry would be transported 2 kilometres southeast by pipeline to the storage site surrounded by a 4 metre high containment berm; 5,900 tonnes per year of iron/arsenic residue would receive treatment and disposal at an off-site facility.

Construction is expected to commence in 2009 with the facility operational by 2012. The project was registered on March 21, 2006; public comments are due by April 25, 2006; and, the Minister's decision is due by May 5, 2006.

The Minister encourages all interested parties to become involved and to make comments known. Comments on submitted documents are invited from the public, addressed in writing to the Minister, and are welcome prior to the deadline date shown.

Further information may be obtained by contacting the Director of Environmental Assessment at (709) 729-4211 or toll-free: 1-800-563-6181 or by mail to:

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Environmental Assessment Information is on the Government Web Site at
<http://www.gov.nl.ca/env>