

Your reference: GOVT-0602-0826-01103

June 18, 2014

Mr. Alvaro Pinto
Director, Fort McKay Sustainability Department
Fort McKay First Nation
P.O. Box 5360
Fort McMurray AB T9H 3G4

Dear Mr. Pinto:

Thank you for your letter of May 20th, 2014 regarding the November 2013 Draft Surface Water Quantity Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River and the Tailings Management Framework.

Alberta manages and develops provincial Crown lands and natural resources in accordance with its legal and constitutional duty to consult with First Nations. Our government respects and considers First Nations' concerns when a Crown decision may adversely impact on First Nations Rights and Traditional Uses. We also recognize that Aboriginal peoples are uniquely positioned to inform integrated resource management initiatives, such as regional planning and environmental monitoring, due to their close connection with the land and its diverse ecosystems.

On behalf of the Government of Alberta, I extend our appreciation to the Fort McKay First Nation for your commitment to this process. Fort McKay has made important contributions to development of the Surface Water Quantity Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River and the Tailings Management Framework and continues to share valuable information and knowledge with the Government of Alberta. Environment and Sustainable Resource Development is committed to conducting a thorough review of the technical review you have commissioned.

First Nations will continue to be consulted when Government of Alberta decisions may adversely impact on First Nations Rights and Traditional Uses. Input that is provided during these consultations will receive due consideration prior to making such decisions.

The Lower Athabasca Regional Plan establishes new approaches for cumulative effects management that did not previously exist. This will provide enhanced sustainability for watersheds that support traditional activities, including navigation and harvesting. As a critical component of regional plan implementation, the Surface Water Quantity Management

Framework for the Lower Athabasca River will help sustain both water quantity and quality and, by extension, fish habitat, which supports aboriginal use and the Treaty Right to fish in the lower Athabasca River.

We sincerely appreciate your feedback on the draft Surface Water Quantity Management Framework, and are pleased that Fort McKay is amenable to specified aspects of the Framework. Our team has thoroughly reviewed input received from all First Nations, and is revising the draft Surface Water Quantity Management Framework to reflect this input. We are currently working to schedule a workshop with Fort McKay in early July, at which time the updated draft Framework will be reviewed and further discussed.

With respect to the draft Tailings Management Framework for the Mineable Oil Sands, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development is considering whether to schedule consultation sessions with First Nations and other interested stakeholders to address areas of concern identified in previous consultation sessions.

Thank you for your continued interest in regional planning.

Sincerely,



Scott Milligan
Executive Director
LUF Regional Planning Branch

cc: Bev Yee, ADM, Integrated Resource Management Planning Division, ESRD
Scott Duguid, Director, ESRD Stewardship Branch
Lawrence Aimoe, Executive Director, Aboriginal Consultation Office
Stephanie Clarke, Director, Strategy Development and Foresight, ESRD
Jennifer Steber, Vice President Stakeholder Engagement, Alberta Energy Regulator