



File: 30200-20/TENCO-16

Reference: 381729

September 2, 2021

**SENT VIA EMAIL**

Jay Gilden  
What Matters In Our Valley  
Email: [jgilden2@gmail.com](mailto:jgilden2@gmail.com)

Dear Jay Gilden:

Thank you for your letter of April 30, 2021, regarding funding to participate in the environmental assessment (EA) of Telkwa Coal Limited's (TCL) proposed Tenas Coal Project (Tenas Project).

As you are aware, the EA process includes opportunities for stakeholders and the public to participate, provide input, and be informed about proposed and certified projects, recommendations, decisions, consultation and communication. At this time, however, we do not have a program for public participation funding.

**Public Input and Technical Expertise on the Tenas Project**

As you are also aware, the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) invited public comments on the Tenas Project's draft Application Information Requirements (AIR) document during a public comment period from June 8 to July 23, 2020. During this time the EAO hosted two virtual open houses on June 17, 2020, and June 23, 2020. As part of that, What Matters In Our Valley provided comments on the draft AIR regarding potential project impacts on water quality in the nearby environment. You will find your comments and response to those comments from TCL included in a Pre-Application Public Consultation Report, available on our EPIC website [here](#).

Looking ahead, members of the public will also have an opportunity to comment on TCL's draft Application for an Environmental Certificate (the Application) and on the EAO's draft Assessment Report. Additional documents related to the Tenas Project can be found on the EAO's [EPIC website](#).

...2

Along with seeking public input and comment, the EAO establishes a Working Group to review and provide advice on EA materials, including the proponent's Application. The Tenas Project's Working Group currently includes representatives of Indigenous nations, local governments, and provincial and federal government agencies (both technical experts and other regulators). The Working Group brings expertise in assessing potential impacts on water quality, air quality, fish and fish habitat, wildlife, and human health, among others. Throughout the EA process, the advice and technical review provided by the working group is posted on the EPIC page and available to the public.

### **Environmental Assessment Revitalization and Public Engagement Funding**

The Environmental Assessment Revitalization Intentions Paper outlined a suite of public engagement enhancements, some of which have been implemented and others that are being developed. The *Environmental Assessment Act* (2018) (the Act) itself does not have a specific provision for providing public participation funding and as such any program would be established via policy, not a regulation.

When the 2018 Act came into force in 2019 the EAO's priority was to ensure that the necessary regulations and policies were in place to support the successful implementation of the 2018 Act. Work related to engaging with Indigenous nations, the new Early Engagement phase, and new Community Advisory Committees was prioritised. As you are aware, the Tenas Project is undergoing an environmental assessment under the *Environmental Assessment Act* (2002) (the 2002 Act), and will follow requirements of the 2002 Act and as outlined in the [Section 11 Order](#).

The EAO continues to advance other Environmental Assessment Revitalization objectives, including options for public participation funding. I encourage you to join our [mailing list](#) to be notified of engagement opportunities that inform the way the EAO conducts its work and engages with the public.

Consistent with previous engagement on the Tenas Project, the EAO project team is available to meet with you and any other community interest groups to specifically discuss any questions or concerns that you may have. While the EAO encourages community groups and other interested parties to participate in project environmental assessments, unfortunately at this time the EAO is not able to provide any financial funding to support their participation.

Thank you again for your interest in the Tenas Project's environmental assessment process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Arend', written in a cursive style.

Elenore Arend  
Associate Deputy Minister and  
Chief Executive Assessment Officer

cc: Tracey Janes, Project Assessment Director, Environmental Assessment Office  
[Tracey.Janes@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Tracey.Janes@gov.bc.ca)

Lindsay Luke, Director of Policy and Legislation,  
Environmental Assessment Office  
[Lindsay.Luke@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Lindsay.Luke@gov.bc.ca)

Julie Chace, Executive Director of Strategic Services and Compliance,  
Environmental Assessment Office  
[Julie.Chace@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Julie.Chace@gov.bc.ca)

Gavin Smith, West Coast Environmental Law  
[gsmith@wcel.org](mailto:gsmith@wcel.org)