



News release

April 14, 2005

Environmental Appeals Board - Notice Of Decision Cardinal River Coals Ltd.

The Environmental Appeals Board has released its Report and Recommendations and the Order of the Minister of Environment regarding three appeals filed by Mr. Ben Gadd in relation to a private haul road that is part of the Cheviot Coal Mine Project.

The appeals were in relation to the decision by Alberta Environment to issue Approval No. 00188589-00-00 under the *Water Act* and Amending Approval Nos. 11767-01-02 and 46972-00-01 under the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* to Cardinal River Coals Ltd. for the construction, operation, and reclamation of a private haul road near Cadomin, Alberta. The Approval and Amending Approvals modified the original design of the Cheviot Coal Mine Project, by adding a private haul road and eliminating the need to rebuild an existing abandoned railway line.

The Board's Report and Recommendations and the Order of the Minister of Environment are the result of a two-day hearing held on January 24 and 25, 2005, in Hinton, Alberta. At the hearing, the Board heard from Mr. Ben Gadd, a group of residents from Cadomin, Cardinal River Coals Ltd., Alberta Environment, and a number of community groups, including the Town of Hinton.

Following a review of all of the evidence presented for the hearing, the Board determined that some aspects of the new design of the haul road negatively affect Mr. Gadd and the Cadomin residents in terms of their use and enjoyment of the local wilderness areas. However, the Board found there are also environmental benefits to the haul road design compared to the original design, most notably the reduced impact on the local watershed and the improved control of human access to the wilderness areas to the west of the haul road, which should reduce illegal hunting in the area. Therefore, as long as the potential for wildlife mortality associated with the haul road can be minimized, the haul road should have a net benefit for the environment compared to the original design of the project.

Based on this conclusion, the Board recommended to the Minister of the Environment that the Approval and the Amending Approvals be confirmed subject to a number of variations. Most of these variations relate to providing additional protection for wildlife. The Minister accepted the Board's recommendations. A complete copy of the Board's Report and Recommendations and the Minister's Order is available on the Board's website at www.gov.ab.ca/eab.

The Environmental Appeals Board is an independent quasi-judicial board that has been established to review certain decisions made by Alberta Environment. The Environmental Appeals Board is separate and apart from Alberta Environment and is composed of environmental experts from a variety of disciplines.

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