

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OFFICE  
DECISION NOTE**

Date: June 3, 2016  
File: 30200-20/HORI-05  
CLIFF/tracking #: 300874

**PREPARED FOR:** Kevin Jardine, Associate Deputy Minister

**ISSUE:** Termination of the environmental assessment (EA) for the Horizon Coal Project (Horizon Coal) under Section 24(3) of the *Environmental Assessment Act* (Act).

**BACKGROUND:**

- Horizon Coal is a proposed coal mine located 25 kilometres southwest of Tumbler Ridge. The mine would produce up to 1.6 million tonnes per year of metallurgical coal using conventional underground and open pit mining techniques.
- The application terms of reference (information requirements) were approved on February 12, 2007; however the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) has not yet received an application for an EA certificate from Peace River Coal Inc. (Proponent).
- In February 2016, EAO initiated a process to terminate or invite withdrawal of inactive EAs in order to mitigate the risks and administrative burden they pose.
- As part of this process, on February 24, 2016, EAO sent a letter to the Proponent advising of EAO's intention to terminate the EA for Horizon Coal.
- On March 11, 2016, the Proponent responded that it has no objections to termination of the EA.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Long delays between the time information is requested and the time it is gathered raises the risk that: proponents may waste resources collecting information that will ultimately prove to be irrelevant to the EA given a changed context; and, that the current information requirements and methodologies will not be met.
- Inactive EA's also create an administrative burden for staff and add to the cumulative time projects spend in EA; time which critics can be wrongly attribute to excessive government "red tape".
- Section 24(3) of the Act enables the Executive Director or Minister to suspend or terminate an EA if the information requested is not provided within the three year deadline set out in the Prescribed Time Limits Regulation.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Terminate the EA for Horizon Coal under Section 24(3) of the Act.

**DECISION:** Approved



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**SIGNATURE**

Kevin Jardine  
Associate Deputy Minister and Executive Director  
Environmental Assessment Office

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2016/06/03  
**DATE SIGNED**

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