

September 8, 2014

Wentzel Coetzer  
Facility General Manager  
Cabot Corp.  
Tantalum Mining Corp. of Canada Ltd.  
Bernic Lake  
PO Box 2000  
Lac du Bonnet, Manitoba ROE 1A0

Dear Mr. Coetzer:

**Project No: 60323895.505**

**Regarding: Environmental Opinion on Potential Impacts of Tanco Mine Geotechnical Instrumentation Installation**

AECOM Canada Ltd. (AECOM) has reviewed the information you have provided on the proposed Tanco Mine Geotechnical Instrumentation Installation. The documents reviewed include:

- TDR and Triaxial Geophone Installation Project - Safety Aspects, SRK Consulting (Canada) Ltd., June 25, 2014 (SRK, 2014)
- Environmental Management Plan & Spill Response Plan, Rodren Drilling Ltd., January 1, 2014 (Rodren, 2014)

Based our review of this information we provide the following opinion with respect to the potential environmental impacts.

## **1. Environmental Impact Assessment**

Three primary environmental risks have been identified within the proposed project: mine flooding, harm to fish and fish habitat, and spills.

### **1.1 Mine Flooding**

AECOM has reviewed the practices described in the Water-to-Rock Seal Procedure (SRK, 2014) and have found them suitable to reduce to acceptable levels, the risk of the lake water entering into the drill hole.

## 1.2 *Causing Harm to Fish and Fish Habitat*

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) includes mineral exploration in the list of project activities and criteria where DFO review is not required. As the proposed work is identical in nature and impact to the type of low density drilling from water used in the mineral exploration activity that is described in DFO's list, it is AECOM's opinion that this work will not require a DFO review.

However, even in the absence of a review, DFO requires that the activities "*avoid causing serious harm to fish by following best practices such as those described in the measures to avoid harm.*"

DFO interprets serious harm to fish as:

- *the death of fish;*
- *a permanent alteration to fish habitat of a spatial scale, duration or intensity that limits or diminishes the ability of fish to use such habitats as spawning grounds, or as nursery, rearing, or food supply areas, or as a migration corridor, or any other area in order to carry out one or more of their life processes;*
- *the destruction of fish habitat of a spatial scale, duration, or intensity that fish can no longer rely upon such habitats for use as spawning grounds, or as nursery, rearing, or food supply areas, or as a migration corridor, or any other area in order to carry out one or more of their life processes.*

AECOM fisheries biologists have reviewed the proposed activities and have determined that, if standard procedures for the protection of aquatic resources are followed, the project will have negligible risk to fish and fish habitat for the following reasons:

- The disturbance of the lake bottom at the installation sites will be localized and of short duration.
- The area of disturbance to the lake bottom from the cables will be small as the cables are less than 10 cm in diameter and 150 m in length. This habitat disruption will not prevent fish from relying on the habitat in that area as they will be covered in new sediments over time and removed when the mine is decommissioned.

## 1.3 *Spill Response*

The procedures detailed in the Environmental Management Plan & Spill Response Plan (Rodren, 2014) are suitable to reduce the potential for a spill to occur while working on land and near or on the water.

## 2. **Environmental Management**

AECOM is currently drafting an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for Project West. The objective of an EMP is to eliminate, minimize, and/or mitigate environmental effects resulting from a project. This is achieved through identifying, responding to, mitigating, and managing adverse environmental effects throughout the life of a project. An EMP incorporates into a single document that is binding on contractors all of the environmental management requirements and responsibilities that have been identified for the project. The EMP for Project West will set out the legal and other

requirements associated with the Project, along with roles and responsibilities, training requirements, communication protocols, corrective and preventative actions, and document control.

AECOM has assessed the environmental risk with the above-described installation of geotechnical instrumentation and will ensure that the above-recommended mitigation strategies are incorporated into the EMP for Project West.

### **3. Conclusions**

AECOM is of the opinion that of the activities described will have a negligible impact on the environment if the practices defined are incorporated into the EMP and followed.

Sincerely,  
**AECOM Canada Ltd.**



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