

DeBeers Canada Inc. (the proponent) is developing a diamond mine approximately 90 km. west of Attawapiskat First Nation, north west of Fort Albany First Nation and Kasheshawan First Nation and north of Moose Cree First Nation. Kimberlite boulders were discovered along the Attawapiskat River in 1987, 16 kimberlite pipes were drilled in 1989, and subsequent drilling in 1997 identified the Victor kimberlite deposits. Advanced exploration was carried out in 2000 and 2001 involving an 80-person camp, sample processing plant and winter airstrip. In 2003, DeBeers determined that the Victor kimberlite deposits were minable.

The Victor Diamond Mine will be open pit and include an on-site ore processing facility with a throughput of 2.5 million tonnes per year, based on production 24-hours/day. The mine has been under construction since 2006 with a completion date of summer 2008 expected. Major project components include: aggregate mines, waste stockpiles, water management facilities, accommodations, onsite roads, air strip, pipelines, transportation corridor, and facilities in Attawapiskat and Moosenee, power line corridor, new winter road from Attawapiskat to the mine and expanded winter road from Moosenee passing Fort Albany First Nation and Kasheshawan First Nation to Attawapiskat First Nation (DeBeers, 2004).

To acquire the appropriate federal and provincial government permits, DeBeers retained AMEC consulting to initiate an environmental assessment of the proposed mine pursuant to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. As a key

part of the environmental assessment process, a public consultation process has to be developed. In accordance with federal Supreme Court decisions and the Crown's duty to consult, as well as provisions in the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and Ontario's Mining Act, local First Nations communities must be consulted.

Your perspective and purpose:

As the Chief and Council of the Fort Albany First Nation, you have had little to no experience with or knowledge of the environmental assessment process. As such, you feel at a terrible disadvantage in this process. You fear that your interests will not be met and that, once again, you and your people will be marginalized.

You see this proposed mine and the associated processes as yet another imposition on your rights as First Peoples. You see it as another step in the 450-year process of colonization. The implications of the Residential School system are fresh in your minds and the minds of your people. You want to ensure that your people's family-based use of the land for hunting, trapping, fishing, collection of traditional medicinal plants, etc., will be protected for seven generations.