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Cheviot Mine Requires New Environmental Impact Assessment

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Although mining has yet to begin at the Cheviot Mine site in the Cardinal Divide area, much work has been completed on private haulroad that will service the mine and that is due for completion in early Fall 2004.

The current Cheviot Mine proposal has been substantially modified from the original project proposed in 1996. The new mine project is described as a "satellite" of the Luscar mine. The proposed rail line and the processing plant have been eliminated and changes have been made to the haul road.

In 1999, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was conducted in the original mine site area. It was deemed that this EIA adequately addressed environmental considerations associated with the private haulroad and no further assessment activity would be required.

However, due to the changes in the new proposal, particularly for mine access, the current haulroad and associated impacts are no longer adequately covered by the old EIA and should require a full review under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA). A new and full review under CEAA would ensure the maintenance of the integrity of the area. The area encompasses, among other things, prime grizzly bear and fish habitat, and harlequin duck populations.

AWA believes that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) must take greater interest in the new mine proposal and the associated impacts. DFO must only issue authorizations for the project once full knowledge of the cumulative and environmental impacts are known.

Immediate action is required to ensure the modified cheviot Coal project receives a full, new environmental review to assess and disclose the full range of impacts. The ecological integrity of this significant and diverse area must be protected.

