

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPONENT: Sun Gro Horticulture Canada Ltd.
PROPOSAL NAME: Moss Spur Peat Mine
CLASS OF DEVELOPMENT: Class 2
TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT: Mining
CLIENT FILE NO.: 4614.0

OVERVIEW:

An Environment Act Proposal, dated September 9, 2004, respecting a peat mining proposal submitted by Sun Gro Horticulture Canada Ltd., was received by the Department on September 22, 2004.

Sun Gro proposes to develop a peat mine in a bog located on parts of Section 4, Township 12, Range 10 EPM, within the R.M. of Reynolds. The overall bog area is referenced as the Moss Spur Bog, with the proposed expansion being south-west of the existing mined Moss Spur bog.

Since peat in the Moss Spur Bog has already been mined for many years, certain infrastructures such as access roads and ditches are already in place, but will have to be extended. Certain preparatory work such as tree clearing and drainage had already been commenced in the past before The Environment Act came into effect, and as such was allowed to continue by virtue of being grandfathered under the Act on the condition that no peat mining be commenced until a Proposal be submitted under the Act, and the proposed development be licenced.

The Proposal was advertised in the Clipper Weekly on October 18, 2004. As well, copies of the Proposal were placed in Public Registries at: the Union Station (Main Floor) in Winnipeg; the St. James-Assiniboia Public Library in Winnipeg; Manitoba Eco-Network; and the Brokenhead River Regional Library. The closing date for the receipt of public comments was specified as November 17, 2004.

Copies of the Proposal were also sent to the applicable members of the interdepartmental Technical Advisory Committee for their review and comment by no later than November 17, 2004.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

No individuals from the public commented on the Proposal.

COMMENTS FROM THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Intergovernmental Affairs commented that the area is designated as a natural Resource area within the Whitemouth River Planning District Development Plan, which acknowledges peat extraction. However, the area is zoned “Resource Development in the RM of Reynolds Zoning By-law, and as such requires a conditional use permit from the R.M.

Disposition

The proponent was informed of this information. The Proponent applied to the R.M. and received a Conditional Use Permit on December 22, 2004.

Mines Branch commented that the Quarry Minerals Regulation MR 65/92 under The Mines and Minerals Act regulates mining activity including peat. The requirements of Manitoba Regulation 65/92 should be included in the drafting of the environment licence. They expressed no concerns with the Proposal, but commented that the Proponent would have to file a Closure Plan in accordance with Mine Closure Regulation 67/99.

Disposition

The information was provided to the Proponent. The Proponent submitted a Closure Plan to the Mines Branch on September 22, 2004.

Historical Resource Branch commented that they had no concerns.

Sustainable Resource Management Branch commented:

- While the proponent provided an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the proposed development, a potentially significant source of greenhouse gas (i.e. carbon dioxide released due to the disturbance of peat as it is harvested) was omitted.
- No sediment and erosion control measures have been identified for circumstances when the field ditches are constructed, deepened or dredged.
- More details are needed on the operation of the sedimentation ponds (i.e. timing, frequency, and magnitude of release).
- Mitigation plans for high water events, including flooding, need to be identified.
- Water quality monitoring should coincide, when possible, during the spring run-off, after high flow events, mid-summer and autumn.
- The mine closure plan identified the potential need to spray the perimeter and ditches with herbicide. The Proposal indicates only the perimeter. Is there potential for the proponent to need to spray the ditches?

Disposition

The comments were referred to the proponent for their information and response. The proponent provided additional information. Concerns are addressed in the Draft Licence.

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) commented that based on the responses to the federal survey received thus far, the application of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act to this project will likely not be required. However, comments to Fisheries and Oceans were still outstanding.

Disposition

The comments were referred to the proponent for their information and response. The proponent provided additional information. Concerns are addressed in the Draft Licence.

PUBLIC HEARING:

The advertisement of the Proposal solicited no request for a public hearing.

RECOMMENDATION:

TAC concerns are addressed in the draft licence.

The responsibility for enforcement of the Licence should remain with Environmental Assessment & Licensing Branch until the proponent complies with Clauses 4, 5, 6, 9, 14, 15, 16, and 24.

A draft Environment Act Licence is attached for the Director's consideration.

PREPARED BY:

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