The Weak Link in EIA Effectiveness: Challenges in Process Administration

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Agenda

1. Introduction and Methods
2. EIA Process Definition and Timelines
3. EIS Guidelines, Preparation and Review
4. Administrator Capacity
5. Conclusions and Recommendations
6. Questions
1 Introduction and Methods

Observations of the administration of EIA processes in Canada are contributing to a decrease in EIA effectiveness.

- The “weak link” is the general capacity of government officials managing EIA processes and the evolving bureaucratic systems they work within.
2 EIA Process Definition and Timelines

EIA process defined in law, regulation and filled in by guidance and administrative practice.

- CEAA 2012 requires timely process management – standard EIA requires decision in 365 days.
- Excludes “stop-clock time”
3 EIS Guidelines, Preparation and Review

- Preparation of responses to Information Requests is on stop-clock time
- Pervasive is the tendency of administrators to manage risk by seeking resolution to all Information Requests
There is no doubt that competent management of a fair and responsible EIA process is a “very tall order”

- EIA administrators at times appear to use stop-clock time, and detailed, even trivial IRs, to make their work easier and less risky for themselves
Conclusions and Recommendations

- Migration towards the management of detailed process, and away from making informed judgment necessary for effective EIA
- Improved training and mentoring of EIA administrators and their technical advisors is a high priority
- Limit or regulate the information request process?
6 Questions?

Thank you for attending
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