



Baffinland says focus now is on keeping Mary River mine open

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Baffinland Iron Mines Corp. has not said whether it plans to shut down its Mary River mine, following plans. (Nunatsiaq News file photo)

Baffinland Iron Mines Corp. isn't saying if it will shut down its Mary River mine, following the federal government's rejection of its expansion plans this week.

Over the course of a four-year public hearing, the company said it may have to temporarily close the mine if the expansion wasn't approved — a claim some opponents of the proposal called a threat.

On Friday, Baffinland spokesperson Peter Akman did not say whether the company has any immediate plans that would affect work at the mine.

He said that decision would be based on a few issues, like if the price of iron increases or decreases and whether Baffinland will be allowed to maintain its shipping limit of six million tonnes per year.

Following the rejection of its expansion plan Wednesday by federal Northern Affairs Minister Daniel Vandal, Baffinland has requested a meeting with Vandal and continues to hold meetings with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, Akman said.

[Vandal rejected the company's expansion](#) plans, known as Phase 2, agreeing with the Nunavut Impact Review Board's conclusion that the expansion has the potential to cause environmental damage, with no evidence that it could be mitigated.

Baffinland's plans included doubling its shipping output to 12 million tonnes per year from six million, and building a 110-kilometre railroad and an additional dock at the Milne Inlet port for shipping.

For the time being, Baffinland has moved away from its expansion plans to focus on keeping the Mary River mine open, Akman said.

The company's permit to ship six million tonnes of iron will expire this year. If another permit isn't issued, Baffinland will only be allowed to ship 4.2 million tonnes in 2023.

Kyle Allen, Vandal's spokesperson, confirmed the minister's office received Baffinland's request and is committed to meeting with the company. He did not say if a time has been set for a meeting.

Baffinland is Nunavut's largest private sector employer and the largest contributor to its economy.

The company estimates the expansion would have generated about \$4.7 billion in tax revenue for Nunavut, royalty and tax revenue for the federal government and royalties to Inuit associations, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association over the lifetime of the mine's expansion.

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