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QIA president says Olympic trip won't affect negotiations

Okalik Eegeesiak says all-expenses-paid trip to London mostly for business

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 2, 2012 6:33 PM CT Last Updated: Aug 3, 2012 1:38 PM CT

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The president of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) is heading to the Olympics in London this weekend.

Okalik Eegeesiak said the all-expenses-paid trip by ArcelorMittal won't hurt her organization's ability to negotiate benefits for Inuit.

"Part of this trip, too, is to urge ArcelorMittal of what Inuit would like to see in the IIBA and hope that we get even a better deal than what Baffinland might be able to offer," said Eegeesiak.



Eegeesiak said her trip will not affect the negotiations between the QIA and Baffinland on the impacts benefits agreement from the proposed iron ore mine. (CBC)

The QIA and Baffinland Iron Mines, which is owned in part by ArcelorMittal, are negotiating an impact benefit agreement for the proposed, multi-billion dollar Mary River project in Nunavut.

The negotiations towards that agreement are confidential, but Eegeesiak said they are in the final stage.

It's not clear if other QIA board members have accepted their invitations to London. One member told CBC News he is still deciding.

Eegeesiak said that while the trip is for business, the Mary River project is not a done-deal. She said ArcelorMittal still needs to decide if it will ultimately go ahead with the project.

She said the QIA fully supports the project and is encouraging Baffinland and Arcelor to follow through.

Comments (10)

- [Itcharight](#)2012/08/03
at 2:54 PM ETDoes anyone get embarrassed anymore? Obvious errors in judgment, conflicts of interest, very bad media interviews with pitiful defenses, a negative outcry from the public, and still they stand their pretending that everything is justified. Narcissism seems to be a prerequisite to get into northern politics these days. Too bad it's created such a toxic political environment that corruption, crime, and a very low standard of moral and ethical values is now a regular occurrence. Thank you for continuing to devalue the North's reputation. *Rating 24 people agree.*
- [QIA beneficiary](#)2012/08/03
at 2:07 PM ETThe Nunatsiaq news comments are flooding in, very entertaining. *Rating 15 people agree.*
- [jiggsdinner](#)2012/08/03
at 8:40 AM ETShe should be dismissed immediately. Blatant influence peddling. *Rating 60 people agree.*
- [Comsepreken](#)2012/08/03
at 8:10 AM ETIf you want to now the truth - just follow the money trail. It really does not matter who or what you are . Guns, whisky, copper pots, medicine, religion and power were very tempting years ago, now its the London Olympics. Pretty Sad.. *Rating 47 people agree.*
- [YukonTrapper](#)2012/08/03
at 2:29 AM ETAs a First Nations person, I am embarassed. The company is doing what they should be doing and what is expected. Buying influence. Wake up Ms. Eegeesiak. You are embarassing all of us. Accepting paid junkets is unethical. You do not accept these lavish gifts from people you are negotiating with. If you can't figure that simple fact out, you shouldn't be in your job. The fact that you don't know this is appalling. *Rating 76 people agree.*
- [Itcharight](#)2012/08/02
at 10:33 PM ETI asked these questions earlier- "Are people naive enough to think that they are not being influenced? Or do they just not care?"The latter is now very apparent. The arrogance to look at the public with a straight face and make these remarks shows such a lack of respect for peoples intelligence. Give the Inuit you represent more credit. There is a general dislike for the situation and as a result the integrity, image and proper code of conduct of the organization is questioned. Other organizations and people around NU and Canada look at this situation and question it too. And the question that is being answered negatively is "does this situation improve QIA's credibility or does it lower their credibility?" *Rating 68 people agree.*
- [tunu26](#)2012/08/02
at 9:41 PM ET"QIA president says Olympic trip won't affect negotiations"...exactly what ArcelorMitall wants everyone to think. *Rating 69 people agree.*
- [ruthlessness](#)2012/08/02
at 8:33 PM ETokay seriously? it's an Inuit Impact Benefit Agreement, not an Okalik Benefit Agreement. give your head a shake, Okalik. i hope the other board members have more sense. *Rating 67 people agree.*
- [storm-in-yukon](#)2012/08/02
at 7:39 PM ETThis trip is either a conflict of interest or a very bad perception of a conflict of interest. "Okalik Eegeesiak said the all-expenses-paid trip by ArcelorMittal won't hurt her organization's ability to negotiate benefits for Inuit.' Okalik- you seem pretty naive. Pay for this trip out of your own pocket silly person. *Rating 68 people agree.*
- [Grouchathome](#)2012/08/02
at 7:38 PM ETNo it won't hurt the ability to negotiate benefits...it will just bring the decision and perhaps your role as President into disrepute...that's what a conflict of interest is all about Ms. Eegeesiak. *Rating 68 people agree.*