



April 27, 2015

To: AASHE STARS Committee

Dear STARS Committee Members,

This letter is written in support of NAIT's STARS Innovation Credit for the NAIT Applied Research Centre for Oil Sands Sustainability (NARCOSS). As the Centre's Managing Director, I develop the strategic direction for the Centre, manage its operations on behalf of Centre's Industry led Management Advisory Board, and as the Institution's managing representative.

NARCOSS was founded in 2010 through the establishment of the Ledcor Applied Research Chair in Oil Sands Environmental Sustainability. This was made possible by a \$1.5 million endowment from the Ledcor Group that was match by the Alberta Provincial Government and NAIT. Since then, NARCOSS has grown and positioned itself to be one of the world's leading centres for applied research, creating and optimizing technologies that can improve efficiencies and reduce environmental impacts associated with the oil sands.

The work done at NARCOSS is meant to bridge the gap between existing oil sands environmental research and real-world solutions for industry, with an immediate impact on sustainability. The primary focus is to foster solutions developed by third-party innovators and small-and-medium size enterprises to be screened, validated, scaled-up, and integrated within a systems and market based approach to complex mineable oil sands tailings and water management challenges.

An example of the innovative research being conducted at NARCOSS includes testing an alternative extraction method which eliminates the use of sodium hydroxide; this reduces the volume of tailings and consequently makes them easier to reclaim. This was referenced in the recent Canadian Federal Economic Action Plan 2015 as an example of research that will be both necessary for supporting sustainable, long-term economic growth, and supporting a stronger society, health system and environment in Canada.

NARCOSS facilitates the development and the adoption of innovative, pragmatic, and impactful technologies that improve the environmental and economic performance of the oil sands. By enabling the identification, development, optimization, and validation of technological solutions to key challenges faced by the oil sands, NARCOSS is able to impact the rate of innovation within the oil sands and significantly advance sustainability in this industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Thera', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Trevor M. Thera
Director – NARCOSS
NAIT Applied Research Centre for Oil Sands Sustainability
School of Sustainable Building and Environmental Management