

Resources Newfoundland and Labrador
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Alisha Morrissey reports:

Proposal deadline extension

Freeport Resources has extended its deadline for proposals to take industrial grade garnet from the beaches of Labrador.

Brenda Clark, president and CEO of Freeport Resources, says the deadline was extended to January 17, but not because there was too little interest. Rather, she says, companies needed more time to finalize their proposals.

“We see it as a staged process, where we receive information on an ongoing basis, and then we’ll put together a more consolidated program,” Clark says from her British Columbia offices.

Freeport officials were originally looking for diamonds when they evaluated the Hutton Beaches which contain about 1.3 million tonnes of sugar-sized garnets.

Plans to harvest garnet have been moving ahead, with the primary market being water jet cutting, a process using the abrasive garnet and high water pressure to cut any material. Clark can’t say what the proposals entail, as it is a confidential process.

“There are all kinds of different things from a logistical perspective: the fact that it’s in Labrador and an ocean location brings interesting challenges that we have to look at. Shipping and logistics: ... all those things factor in.”

Clark has received proposals from a number of interested parties who have “many ideas” on how to remove the garnet from the sand including suction or conveyors.

Freeport has been planning for about a decade to get to this point and six weeks won’t make too much of a difference, Clark says, as this summer geological and marine studies were a priority for the company.

“What we’re thinking of doing this summer is kind of like a trial run to test the logistics.” she says.