



May 2, 2011

Mikidjuk Akavak
Chairperson,
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
Parnaivik Building
P.O. Box 1379,
Iqaluit NU X0A 0H0

Re: Public hearing of the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board to consider proposed modifications to the current Total Allowable Harvest for the Davis Strait Polar Bear Subpopulation

Dear Mr. Akavak;

Please accept the following as Makivik Corporation's submission tabled for the upcoming Nunavut Wildlife Management Board public hearing on the proposed modifications to the current Total Allowable Harvest for the Davis Strait polar bear subpopulation to take place May 16 & 17, 2011. Makivik Corporation is fully supportive of the Government of Nunavut Department of the Environment recommendation of an increase to the annual Total Allowable Harvest of 15 bears from the Davis Strait subpopulation. Equally, as proposed by the Government of Nunavut, Makivik Corp. supports the allocation of six of these bears to Nunatsiavut, and the remainder of the increase, nine bears, to be divided amongst three Nunavut communities.

The latest available estimate for the Davis Strait polar bear subpopulation is 2158 with a 95% confidence interval of 1978-2338 bears. This is a large increase from the previous 1995 population estimate of 1400 bears. Recent research has also indicated that there is 3% population growth before the annual harvest is factored in. Although this same research suggests that the body condition and size of the bears is declining, and thus may be an indicator of a future subpopulation decline, many Inuit feel that there are too many polar bears and that an increase in the Total Allowable Harvest is needed to address Inuit concerns of personal safety and to bring down the population of Davis Strait polar bears to a level that is environmentally sustainable.

At the User-to-User meeting held in September 2010, in Kuujjuaq, Nunavik, hunters from Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, and Nunavut all expressed similar concerns. The hunters stated that more bears than ever were being seen, were entering communities more frequently than had been noted previously, were endangering Inuit camps and destroying property, and were posing an increased threat to other species of wildlife such as seals and bird colonies. Within this context, the Inuit users all agreed that the best manner to address this problem was by increasing the Total Allowable Harvest for the Davis Strait polar bear subpopulation. The Users also agreed that Nunatsiavut should be the first to receive an additional allocation of any increase in the Total Allowable Harvest, and recommended that Nunatsiavut be allocated six bears, in addition to the six bears already harvested there. All Users, from Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, and Nunavut, supported this recommendation.

As you are probably aware, under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, Nunavik Inuit are guaranteed 62 bears per year from the South Hudson Bay, Foxe Basin, and Davis Strait polar bear subpopulations. Hunters from Nunavik annually harvest an average of 14 bears (5-year average) from the Davis Strait subpopulation. Makivik Corp. does not feel that the current level of harvesting of Davis Strait polar bears in Nunavik significantly impacts the Davis Strait subpopulation and should not be considered as a significant factor when determining any change to the Total Allowable Harvest. An increase in the Total Allowable Harvest of 15 polar bears from the Davis Strait subpopulation both respects the wishes of Inuit from Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, and Nunavut, and will result in a healthier subpopulation that is more in accordance with a population level that is accepted by the users and is also environmentally sustainable.

Sincerely,



Johnny Peters
Vice-president
Resource Development Department
Makivik Corporation