SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

FOR Information: **Decision:** X

Issue: **Resubmission of the draft Nunavut Polar Bear Co-Management Plan**

Background

During the development of the draft Polar Bear Co-Management Plan (the plan, Attachment 1) a working group was tasked with developing a replacement to the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The working group focused on addressing concerns with the existing MOU and with ensuring that the plan reflects the jurisdictional perspective on polar bears. Overall, polar bears are doing well and have increased from the low population numbers of the 1960's and 70's. Public safety has become a serious concern as a result of the increase in population and /or changes in bear distribution and concentration.

A successful polar bear management plan needs to reflect Inuit societal values and concerns. It must support and ensure continued Inuit involvement in polar bear co-management and conservation.

The new draft plan better reflects Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and is more accessible to Nunavummiut.

Current Status

The Department of Environment (DOE) has incorporated many of the comments received during the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) Written Public Hearing (September – October 2015) into the draft plan, which has improved the document. When reviewing comments received, DOE considered what was heard from and said to communities and Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTO's) during consultations. Where possible, efforts were made to modify language or to better represent the position that was being proposed.

Consultations

The initial consultations and summary were provided with the original DOE submission. Additional consultations were undertaken after revisions were made to the draft to address comments received during the NWMB Written Public Hearing. These consultations were undertaken during October and November of 2016. DOE presented the revised draft plan to the Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWO's) at their Annual General Meetings, as well to the Nunavut Inuit Wildlife and Environment Advisory Committee (NIWEAC) during its fall meeting. The NIWEAC was instrumental in developing the initial draft in 2014. The Consultation Summary for those meetings is included as Attachment 2 of this document. The current draft Nunavut Polar Bear Co-Management Plan reflects input received from those meetings.

DOE also sought a second review of the draft plan from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and their feedback was incorporated, as ECCC was the most critical commenter during the NWMB Written Public Hearing. ECCC's comments were also reflected in other reviews, notably by Parks Canada and World Wildlife Fund. This second ECCC review resulted in additional edits to better clarify language in the draft plan.

Recommendation

DOE requests that the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board approve the revised Nunavut Polar Bear Co-Management Plan.

Attachments

1) Draft Polar Bear Co-Management Plan
2) Consultation Summary