



AUG 07 2014

Ben Kovic
Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
Box 1379
Iqaluit NU X0A 0H0

Dear Mr. Kovic:

Thank you for your letter of July 14, 2014, addressed to the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, providing the opportunity to comment on the NWMB's reconsideration and final decision concerning the level of total allowable harvest (TAH) from the Foxe Basin management unit of polar bears in the Nunavut Settlement Area. Environment Canada recognizes and appreciates the unique role that the WMB plays in decision-making for the management of polar bear populations, and remains supportive of the established decision-making process.

As you are aware, I wrote to the NWMB in July 2013, to provide Environment Canada's perspectives on the proposed change in TAH for the Foxe Basin. I wish to reiterate the comments made at that time, emphasizing that Environment Canada firmly believes that the setting of harvest levels must continue to be based on sound conservation principles, and that it is important to maintain a harvest level for the entire management unit that is biologically sustainable. Consideration of an appropriate harvest level for Nunavut needs to take into account the needs and harvest levels of Nunavik harvesters. Specifically, Environment Canada could be supportive of a small increase in the TAH for the Foxe Basin as a whole.

As I noted in my previous correspondence, the absence of a formal harvest management system in Nunavik remains a concern. It will be crucial for the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB) to fulfill its mandate and commitment to establish a management system, and for the two Boards to coordinate research programmes and the establishment of sustainable harvest levels. Environment Canada recommends that any decision by the NWMB should be reconsidered once the NMRWB has established a formalized management system and as a harvest level is being established for Nunavik harvesters.

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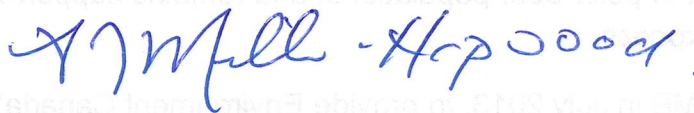


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I wish to acknowledge the sound analysis that was provided by the Honourable Johnny Mike, Nunavut's Minister of Environment, in his correspondence to the NWMB dated May 29, 2014. Environment Canada is generally supportive of the positions expressed by Minister Mike regarding the NWMB decisions.

Finally, as you are aware, there continues to be international scrutiny surrounding harvest quota decisions made in Canada regarding polar bears. Therefore, there is a collective responsibility to demonstrate that Canada's polar bears are being managed in a responsible manner. Environment Canada recognizes that this correspondence will be made public, and hopes that this will be viewed as evidence of the openness and thoroughness of the decision making process that has been established in Canada.

Sincerely,



Sue Milburn-Hopwood
Director General
Canadian Wildlife Service