



February 5, 2014

Mr. Ben Kovic
Chair, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
P.O. Box 1379
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0

Fax: (867) 975 7320

Dear Mr. Kovic,

Re: Request to Increase the Total Allowable Harvest of Bowhead Whale for the Qikiqtaaluk Region to two.

The Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (QWB) is requesting to increase the Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) for Bowhead Whale for the Qikiqtaaluk to two. If approved, this would result in a Nunavut TAH of four Bowhead Whales per year.

This request comes at the direction of a resolution passed at QWB's 2013 AGM. The AGM was held in Iqaluit in November 2013 and a copy of the resolution is attached to this submission. The discussion that preceded this resolution was engaging. Communities across the region expressed their interest in supporting additional Bowhead Whale hunts. Some communities expressed their interest in holding yearly hunts.

Multiple organizations are involved in supporting successful Bowhead Whale hunts in Nunavut. In 2009, NWMB approved a TAH of three Bowhead Whales in Nunavut, with each region having a single hunt. This decision was an increase from the 2008 decision to hold two hunts in the territory. Each RWO is responsible for selecting the host community of its own region. QWB is responsible for selecting the community from the Qikiqtani region, a decision made at our AGM by vote of the entire QWB delegation. Once a community is selected, its HTO is responsible for developing a hunt plan that includes assigning various roles to its community members. HTOs must also develop a budget for the hunt, including fundraising plans. QWB is explicit in stating that Bowhead Whale hunts cannot be funded by HTO operational funds. HTOs submit final hunt plans and budget to QWB for final approval by its executive. Upon approval, DFO issues a license for the Bowhead Whale. NTI has been integral in supporting a safe and successful hunt by providing safety and



equipment training to hunt committees, and being involved in recording information from the hunt. Also, NTI has been working with a veterinarian from the University of Prince Edward Island to collect samples from the landed whale.

Current research on Bowhead Whale suggests the Baffin population is stable and growing. In 2009, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) upgraded the status of Bowhead Whale to “special concern” from “endangered”, a classification that was in place since 1986. In the summer of 2013, DFO conducted a survey focusing on Baffin Bay Narwhal, but also recorded observations of Bowhead Whale. Results of this survey are not expected till later this year. In its draft Integrative Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP), a plan led by DFO and involving Nunavut co-management partners, it cites the best available information, and suggests a yearly Potential Biological Removal (PBR) of 90 whales from the Eastern Canada – Western Greenland population. Even when considering whales designated for Greenland and Nunavik, we believe the impact of an additional Bowhead whale hunt on this population to be minimal.

As stated earlier, our delegation was adamant in supporting an increase in the number of hunts for this region. We appreciate that our request for one additional whale is conservative. Matters of administration direct our rationale. QWB is committed to working with our member HTOs to ensure financial accountability, particularly for special projects, which the Bowhead whale hunt is classified. We wish to support HTOs in developing experience in successfully completing the reporting process for Bowhead Whale hunts. While QWB is responsible for receiving and approving Bowhead whale hunts plans and the appropriate budget, we also request a final budget and report once the hunt is complete. We believe that with focused support, our HTOs can improve the quality of its reporting back.

QWB, like all RWOs, has been working to develop its organizational capacity. We currently have two staff members who work to support the day-to-day activities of HTOs, while also supporting the QWB executive in policy issues, developed through their work with our co-management partners. In recent years, there has been focused attention to support the financial capacities of our member HTOs, thanks in large part to the leadership of NIWS and NTI. The culmination of this work has resulted in a better structure of support for our HTOs. We feel this support will only continue to get stronger. In working with NIWS, we are working to bring our HTOs onto a centralized accounting process, which would greatly lift the financial responsibilities of our HTOs, and allow our HTOs to develop in other areas of

While saying this, QWB recognizes the importance of bowhead whale hunt to individual communities, to the entire region and the territory as a whole. We confidently support the development of the Bowhead Whale hunt in this region. In increasing the number of hunts in this region we are working to develop, and diversify, the experience of this region. In doing this, we believe we create the opportunity to develop more effective strategies to deal with a range of issues beyond ensuring a safe and successful hunt; issues like processing, distribution and utilization of the whale. By providing our HTOs with the opportunity to gain this experience, we allow our HTOs to be active participants in the science and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit on this whale population. The hunt is an important meeting point for these two ways of knowing.

In closing, I would like to state that QWB feels that we are in a better position to support our member HTOs in meeting the full spectrum responsibilities required for a safe and successful Bowhead Whale Hunt. We request this addition be effective for the 2014 hunt. At our 2013 AGM, 4 communities formally expressed their interest in hosting the 2014 Bowhead Whale hunt. If this request were approved, the site of the additional hunt would be chosen from the pool of initial interested communities. QWB believes in building the experience of supporting two hunts will led the way for future requests for additional whales, pending a continually healthy population.

Thank you,

James Qillaq
Chair, Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board

**Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board
Annual General Meeting
November 12-14, 2013**

James O'Leary

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