

May 10, 2017

Peter Kydd  
Director of Wildlife Management  
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board  
PO Box 1379  
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0

**Re: Request to transfer portion of Qikiqtaaluk regional exploratory turbot allocation for harvest outside the Nunavut Settlement Area**

Dear Mr. Kydd,

Nattivak Hunters and Trappers Association (HTA) is seeking Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) approval to harvest up to 45 MT of the 50 MT inshore exploratory turbot allocation granted to Nattivak HTA in 2016 for a three-year period ending 2018 outside the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA) in both 2017 and 2018. In your June 24, 2016 letter, it was indicated that transfers of this quota for harvesting within the NSA must simply be effected by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, but harvesting activities outside the NSA required NWMB approval.

Nattivak HTA is working in partnership with Arctic Fishery Alliance (AFA) for the purposes of (a) developing an inshore turbot fishery near Qikiqtarjuaq and (b) optimizing the design and use of turbot pot technology. Previous studies conducted by AFA have indicated that the nearshore aggregation of turbot occur in a deep-water trough to the south and east of Broughton Island, and extends between 25 and 50 nautical miles offshore. Developing an inshore fishery will require flexibility to target this aggregation within and outside the NSA. We also firmly believe that turbot pots will support the development of Nunavut's inshore turbot fisheries by eliminating the Greenland shark by-catch concerns that are associated with bottom longlines.

However, in order for AFA to assist Nattivak HTA complete this necessary research and development, the pot designs must be tested under established commercial fishing conditions. Due to the fishing management measures within the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA), AFA's vessel the Kiviuq is unable to conduct the test fishing within the only commercial inshore area – Cumberland Sound. Consequently, we are requesting that the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) grant permission for AFA to fish this quota outside the NSA on the commercial fishing grounds of NAFO division 0A. Per your June 8<sup>th</sup> letter, attached please find the required Proposal for Decision in both English and Inuktitut.

The NWMB can be confident the quota will still be used as it was intended – specifically, for the development of Nunavut's inshore fisheries. Some of these communities, particularly those whose inshore turbot fishery development has been hindered by high levels of Greenland shark by-catch, will

have an alternative harvesting method available that eliminates this concern. We are certain this is a reasonable application of this quota, and hope the NWMB will agree.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Jacopie Audlakiak  
Chairman  
Nattivak HTA

**SUBMISSION TO THE  
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**FOR**

**Information:**     

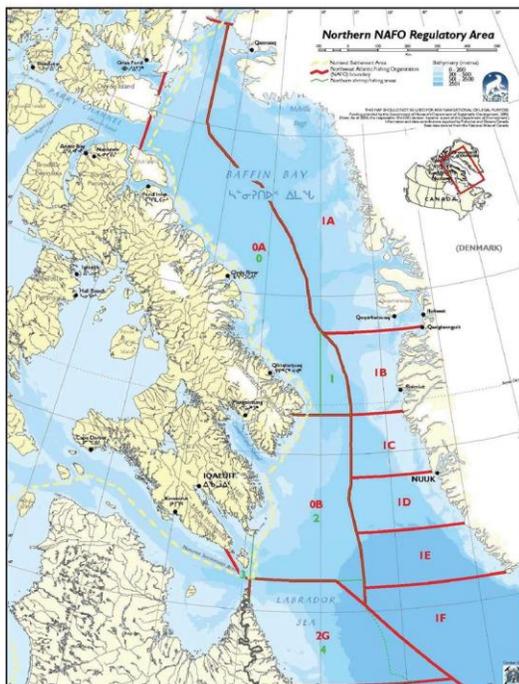
**Decision:**   X  

**Issue:**

Nattivak HTA is requesting permission for 45 MT of the 50 MT of Qikiqtaaluk regional exploratory turbot allocation granted to the HTA until 2018 to be harvested outside the Nunavut Settlement Area by Arctic Fishery Alliance in 2017 and 2018.

**Background:**

The Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) allocates 100 MT of turbot to the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (QWB) for regional exploratory fishing efforts. It is to be used within the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA) for inshore turbot fisheries development. In 2016, the QWB sub-allocated 50 MT of this quota to Nattivak HTA for three years (ending 2018).



In a June 8<sup>th</sup> letter from Peter Kydd, Director of Wildlife Management of the NWMB, Nattivak HTA was informed that transfers of this sub-allocation to other parties, such as Arctic Fishery Alliance, must be approved by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Nattivak is seeking this permission at the time of writing. In addition, this letter informed Nattivak that permission from the NWMB must be sought if either Nattivak or AFA wished to harvest the 45 MT outside the NSA. Consequently, this Proposal for Decision is the resulting request for permission to harvest 45 MT of the exploratory quota in NAFO division 0A in 2017 and 2018 (shown in the picture on the left).

According to the NWMB's *Allocation Policy for Commercial Marine Fisheries*, the 100 MT quota is intended to encourage inshore fisheries development.

Similarly, the 2016 Nunavut Fisheries Strategy, which was recently approved by the Government of Nunavut, stresses the importance of developing Nunavut's inshore fisheries.

In the Baffin region, the issue of by-catch in Nunavut's turbot fishery has been well-documented. A study was conducted in 2011 in Cumberland Sound that attempted to identify ways to reduce the capture of Greenland shark. It has also been acknowledged that in some areas, the development of an inshore turbot fishery has been limited due to the high shark by-catch. Based on AFA's research to date, these pots can solve the inshore fishery's by-catch issue and will significantly contribute to the development and sustainability of this fishery.

Nattivak HTA is one of the owners of the Arctic Fishery Alliance partnership of Hunters and Trappers Associations (HTAs) and the Community Trusts for the communities of Qikiqtarjuaq, Grise Fiord, Arctic Bay, and Resolute Bay. Since the partnership's formation in 2008, AFA's primary goal has been to use a portion of the profits from its harvesting operations as a means for economic and fisheries development in the four ownership communities, as well as throughout Nunavut. AFA's investments in marine research between 2013 and 2016 have already benefited Nunavummiut by:

- Improving food security
- Identifying local economic development opportunities
- Building local research capacity and fisheries experience

In October 2014, AFA conducted a turbot pot by-catch reduction experiment in the offshore waters adjacent to Broughton Island in an area identified to have a population of turbot during AFA's 2013 exploratory fishery. Greenland sharks (*Somniosus microcephalus*) are a common by-catch in Cumberland Sound's inshore longline turbot fishery and have limited the use of longlines in Nunavut's offshore fishery.

Pots were suggested as a possible gear substitution for Nunavut's turbot fisheries. Studies in Newfoundland showed increased catch rates of commercial groundfish using pots relative to traditional gear types. In addition, these pots have low energy use, effective species selectivity, high safety against disturbances from sea mammals and large sharks, and low gear construction costs.

However, very little scientific research had been conducted on the ability of these pots to capture turbot. Consequently, AFA partnered with researchers from the Centre for Sustainable Aquatic Resources at the Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University to conduct an initial turbot pot study, comparing the catch rates and by-catch levels of hook and line fishing gear relative to baited turbot pots. Overall, results of this preliminary turbot potting study were extremely encouraging and warranted additional studies. Specifically, it was determined that:

- The average catch rates of turbot in baited pots were 5.4 times higher than catch rates of bottom longlines.
- When compared to longlines, the use of pots eliminated by-catch of Greenland shark and skate.
- By-catch of grenadier and Northern wolffish was substantially reduced.

- Turbot captured in pots were alive and in good physical condition.

These factors have the potential to maximize market quality and ultimately revenues to the industry. Overall, results of this preliminary turbot potting study were extremely encouraging and warranted additional studies. Subsequent studies in 2015 and 2016 continue to indicate these pots will eliminate Greenland shark by-catch while harvesting a premium product. At present, the several variations of the pots are being tested to determine the optimal design that maximizes turbot catches while withstanding the rigours of commercial use.

Therefore, to adequately test this gear, Nattivak HTA on behalf of AFA is requesting permission to utilize this 45 MT quota outside the Nunavut Settlement Area in NAFO division 0A – either targeting the near shore aggregation located to the south and east of Broughton Island up to 50 nautical miles from shore, or on the commercial fishing grounds. Due to the fishing management measures within the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA), AFA's vessel the Kiviug is unable to conduct the test fishing within the only commercial inshore area – Cumberland Sound. Given that this quota has been inconsistently harvested in previous years, and that the proposed research has the potential to significantly contribute to the development of the inshore fishery, Nattivak feels this request is reasonable and aligned with the intended use of the quota.

It is AFA's objective to have a finalized pot design within a year or two. The partnership will then seek to DFO approval for the design as a recognized fixed-gear in Nunavut's commercial turbot fishery. The long-term goal is to replace the use of gillnets in the offshore fishery and provide an alternative fishing method for the inshore turbot fishery. In both cases, the use of these pots is expected to:

- Reduce all ecosystem impacts including:
  - By-catch of Greenland sharks and skates
  - Marine mammal entanglement
  - Ghost fishing of gillnets
  - Bottom impacts and damage
- Reduce bait, gear replacement and labour costs
- Increase product quality and consistency (preliminary estimates suggest a premium of 10% for pot-caught turbot)
- Create niche market at higher prices for high-quality products

Nattivak and AFA require approximately 15 minutes to present this request orally.

### **Consultation:**

This research has been undertaken at the direction of AFA's Board of Directors, which is composed of the Chairs of the HTAs of its owner communities – including Nattivak HTA. Also consulted have been the Mayors of each of these communities in their role as Trustee for the Community Trusts. This research is discussed at the annual meetings of AFA's Board since it was conceived.

In addition, this research has been discussed at the annual Fisheries and Sealing science and research planning meeting since 2014. Present at these meetings includes representatives from Nunavut's fishing industry, DFO, CanNor, Fisheries and Sealing, NTI, and HTAs.

In general, there has been strong support from industry, government (territorial and federal), scientists and our partnership for this research. It is working towards Nunavut's goals of healthy and sustainable fisheries that promote economic development.

**Recommendation:**

Permission should be granted to fish the 45 MT of turbot outside the NSA in NAFO division 0A.

Although the fishing will take place outside of the NSA, it is Nattivak's position that the quota is still being used to support inshore fishing development, in keeping with its original intent. If the pot's design is perfected and approved for use, those communities in the Baffin region whose turbot fisheries have been limited by Greenland shark by-catch will have a new and effective way to avoid this problem and move forward with the fishery.

**Prepared By:**

Harry Earle, General Manager of Arctic Fishery Alliance on behalf of Nattivak HTA.

709-579-3278

**Date:**

May 10, 2017