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**Fax Transmission**

To: Manasie Audlakiak

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From:

Adarnie Padlayat       Mark O'Connor

Sarah Lisa Kasudluak       Lorrie Kasudluak

urgent       confidential       as requested       original to be mailed

Ref: Submission

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25, 2013

Letter of Appreciation  
from the  
NMRWB  
to the  
Foxe Basin  
Community



The Nunavut Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB) is pleased to acknowledge the support and assistance provided by the Foxe Basin community in the development of the NMRWB's management plan for the Foxe Basin.

Letter of Appreciation

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Nunavut Marine Region Wildlife Board  
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Phone: (819) 254-8667 | Fax: (819) 254-8816  
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R. Tuckwell

Director  
Nunavut Marine Region Wildlife Board

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July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Manasi Audiakiak  
A/Chairperson of the  
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board  
Inuksuqat Complex, P.O. Box 1379  
Iqaluit, NU, XCA 0H0



**RE: Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board submission to the public hearing of the NWMB concerning the level of regional total allowable harvest for the Foxe Basin polar bear sub-population in the Nunavut Settlement Area.**

Mr. Audiakiak,

The Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB) appreciates this opportunity to share its views on the on the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board's (QWB) request to increase levels of total allowable harvest for the Foxe Basin polar bear sub-population.

Please confirm reception of this document and of its inclusion within the NWMB's public hearing registry. The information and positions detailed within this submission will be explained in further detail by the NMRWB during your September 10-11, 2013 public hearing in Iqaluit. Should you or your staff require clarification on any of the information contained herein, please do not hesitate to contact our staff at the coordinates below:

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P.O. Box 433, Inukjuak, QC, J0M 1M0  
Phone: (819) 254-8567 | Fax: (819) 254-8816  
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On behalf of the NMRWB, I thank the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board in advance for giving full consideration to the information presented herein when reaching a decision on this matter.

Sincerely,

*R. Tookaluk*  
Robbie Tookaluk  
A/Chairman  
Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board

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### The Foxe Basin polar bear sub-population

Having reviewed the Government of Nunavut's Foxe Basin (FB) polar bear aerial survey report, the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB) considers this sub-population to be healthy. While we caution a direct comparison of the latest population estimate with those obtained previously through mark-recapture studies, it appears based on these findings and on the observations of Inuit, that the population has at least remained stable under recent harvesting pressures.

However, given that no time-series information is available to validate the findings of the aerial survey the NMRWB recommends that any increases above current harvesting levels (Nunavik and Nunavut combined) should be slight. This is especially important considering the management actions being undertaken to ensure the sustainability of harvests in Nunavik (see below).

Given the shared-nature of this sub-population, between Nunavut and Nunavik communities, it is imperative that the NMRWB and NWMB have similar management objectives (e.g. target population size, time to reach target population, etc.) going forward. Although the NMRWB currently has not established its management objectives for Foxe Basin polar bears, we are open to working with the NWMB to establish agreed-upon management objectives and to determine the overall level of harvests necessary to meet these objectives. Such an exercise should be carried out before the NWMB makes a decision regarding the QWB's request to increase the total allowable harvest (TAH).

### Harvesting by Nunavik Inuit

As indicated in the NWMB's public hearing notice, you must consider harvests by Inuit from Puvirnituq, Akullivik, Ivujivik and Salluit when rendering a decision regarding TAH of FB polar bears (harvest statistics are maintained by the Quebec government). Since the NMRWB has yet to consult these communities, we will not comment on their needs; doing so may be done by the Makivik Corporation on behalf of Nunavik Inuit, or by the *Regional and Local Nunavimmi Umajulrijiit Katujjlaqatigiinninga* (RNUK and LNUKs respectively).

Historically no limits have been imposed on the number of FB bears harvested by Nunavik Inuit, in accordance with the *Guaranteed Harvest Levels* established under s. 24.6.2 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. It should be noted that sport-harvesting is currently not permitted in Nunavik.

### The management of Foxe Basin polar bears in Nunavik

Harvesting, by Nunavik Inuit, is presently regulated by the government of Quebec. All polar bears that are harvested must be registered; a tag affixed to the pelt attests that this requirement has been met.

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Following a request from the Minister of Environment Canada in January 2012, the NMRWB is undertaking the establishment of a comprehensive management system, including levels of total allowable take, for all polar bear sub-populations occurring in Nunavik based on an understanding that the absence of harvesting limits poses a potential conservation concern.

A number of issues have led to delays in this process, however the establishment of a comprehensive polar bear management plan remains a priority for the NMRWB. It is anticipated that a first hearing on Southern Hudson Bay polar bears will be held this fall. Additional hearings for FB and Davis Strait will be held as soon afterwards as is feasible.

#### **Impact of the NWMB's decision on polar bear management in Nunavik**

Any decision of the NWMB on this matter will likely be associated to a management objective for the FB sub-population as a whole. In other words, the NWMB will determine a level of TAH that is Nunavut's portion of the overall number of bears that can be harvested while either maintaining the population at current levels, allowing it to increase, or to reducing the number of bears in FB, depending on the management objectives decided upon. Because FB is a shared sub-population the NWMB's decision will to a certain extent limit the number of bears that can be hunted by Nunavik Inuit to meet the same population objective.

Should both Boards be managing FB polar bears in hopes of achieving the same population objective, it is important that the NWMB's decision be such that remaining harvests be sufficient not only to meet the basic needs of Nunavimmiut, but also to allow the NMRWB to put in place a management system that can be applied feasibly at the community level. Since no consultations or hearings have taken place towards this management system, it remains premature for us to advance how many bears would be sufficient to attain this purpose.

Whatever the outcome of the NWMB's consideration, we trust that your decision will explicitly describe the considerations that you have given to the NMRWB's efforts to put in place a management system that will limit harvesting by Nunavik Inuit. Given the potential implications of a TAH increase on Nunavik Inuit harvesting, we trust that the NWMB will explore whether alternatives to address the growing number of defense kills, other than the QWB's proposal to increase the TAH are feasible.

#### **Concluding Remarks**

The NMRWB empathises with the request put forward by the QWB as the issue of defense kills and the presence of bears in or near communities is a growing issue in Nunavik as well. Given that, the position that we are putting forward seeks collaboration between the NWMB and the NMRWB in determining a single management objective for this subpopulation, and to subsequently ensure that the resulting harvest levels meet the needs of both Nunavut and Nunavik Inuit.