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June 30th 2016

Honourable Dominic LeBlanc
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
15th Floor, Centennial Towers
200 Kent Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0E6

Dear Minister LeBlanc:

Re: Nunavut Wildlife Management Board decisions and recommendations concerning proposed modifications to total allowable harvests for Baffin Bay, Jones Sound, and Smith Sound narwhal stocks and approval of the Narwhal Flexible Quota System and Tag Transfer Policy Phase II

At the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's (NWMB or Board) June 2016 Regular Meeting (RM002-2016) Fisheries and Oceans Canada presented a *Proposal for NWMB Decision* (Proposal) seeking modifications to the existing levels of total allowable harvest for Baffin Bay narwhal stocks, as well as Jones and Smith Sounds narwhal stocks. The Proposal is also seeking NWMB approval of the Narwhal Flexible Quota System and Tag Transfer Policy Phase II of the *Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Narwhal in the Nunavut Settlement Area*. The NWMB considered the Proposal during its In-Camera meeting (IC004-2016) on June 13th 2016 and made the following three decisions:

RESOLVED that, pursuant to Sections 5.2.26, 5.2.34(d)(i) and 5.6.16 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, the NWMB hold a written public hearing concerning the proposed approval of Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Narwhal Flex Quota System and Tag Transfer Policy Phase II of the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Narwhal in the Nunavut Settlement Area.

RESOLVED that, pursuant to Section 5.2.26 and 5.6.16 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, the NWMB hold a written public hearing concerning the approval of Fisheries and Oceans Canada's proposed changes to the existing levels of total allowable harvest for the Somerset Island, Admiralty Inlet, East Baffin Island, Jones Sound and Smith Sound narwhal stocks.

RESOLVED that, with respect to a proposed modification to the level of total allowable harvest for the Eclipse Sound narwhal stock, the NWMB recommend to the Minister of

Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans first complete the following steps:

- 1. Conduct an additional aerial survey and related research concerning the stock, to be followed by consultations with the community of Pond Inlet; and*
- 2. Following step number 1, deliver an updated Proposal for Decision and consultation report regarding the proposed level of total allowable harvest for the Eclipse Sound narwhal stock.*

In arriving at the above decisions, the Board considered the most recent scientific information provided by Fisheries and Oceans Canada as well as community input provided during consultations and correspondence from the Mittimatalik Hunters and Trappers Organization (attached as Appendix A). The Board felt that the concerns raised by the community of Pond Inlet regarding the survey results for the Eclipse Sound narwhal stock warranted additional research before the NWMB considered further restricting Inuit harvesting in the associated management unit. The Board is therefore recommending that Fisheries and Oceans Canada conduct an additional aerial survey of the Eclipse Sound narwhal stock and conduct consultations with the community of Pond Inlet regarding the results of this survey prior to submitting an updated Proposal for Decision and consultation report to the NWMB.

In the meantime, the NWMB intends to proceed with written public hearings to consider the proposed modifications to the levels of total allowable harvest for the Somerset Island, Admiralty Inlet, East Baffin Island, Jones Sound and Smith Sound narwhal stocks, as well as the approval of the Narwhal Flexible Quota System and Tag Transfer Policy Phase II of the *Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Narwhal in the Nunavut Settlement Area*. As there were no concerns raised through the community consultations regarding the Narwhal Flexible Quota System and Tag Transfer Policy Phase II, the NWMB does not foresee any complications regarding the written hearing process to consider these two elements of the Proposal and will shortly initiate this written public hearing. However, the Board recognizes that you or your Department may have concerns regarding the NWMB's consideration of modifications to all Baffin Bay narwhal stocks except the Eclipse Sound stock. The NWMB is therefore notifying you of its decisions and recommendations prior to initiating a second written public hearing to consider this element of the Proposal, to provide an opportunity to raise any potential concerns.

The NWMB would appreciate a prompt response regarding the three decisions and recommendations listed above and the Board's proposed way forward. The NWMB would also like to encourage you and your Department to continue to consult with the community of Pond Inlet on the concerns raised regarding the aerial survey conducted for Eclipse Sound narwhal and the proposed management changes for that stock.

If you or your officials have any questions or concerns regarding the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact the NWMB at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Shewchuk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a stylized "S".

Daniel Shewchuk
A/Chairperson of the
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

Attachments (1)



SEP 12 2016

Mr. Daniel Shewchuk
Acting Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
P.O. Box 1379
Iqaluit, Nunavut
X0A 0H0

Dear Mr. Shewchuk:

Thank you for your correspondence of June 30, 2016. I appreciate the Board providing the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) with the opportunity to comment on its process to consider DFO's request for decision to approve the Narwhal Flex Quota System/Tag Transfer Policy Phase II and to modify existing Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) levels for the six high Arctic narwhal stocks.

DFO supports the approach to conduct a written public hearing to consider approving the narwhal flex quota/tag transfer policy. I understand this process is ongoing and I look forward to receiving your decision on this matter.

DFO supports a written public hearing process to consider DFO's request to modify existing TAH levels for the Somerset Island, Jones Sound, Smith Sound and East Baffin Island narwhal stocks.

DFO does not support the Board's approach to exclude the Eclipse Sound narwhal stock from the current decision-making process and requests that the Board make a decision on all six stocks, as per the original 'Request for Decision.' The aerial surveys that were completed in 2013 were conducted at the same time using consistent methodology for all six high Arctic narwhal stocks. In addition, community consultations with Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet, Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq followed a similar format and shared the same information.

Recognizing the Board's authority to hold public hearings into any issue requiring a decision on its part, DFO would like to suggest that the Board consider employing the same public hearing process for both the Admiralty Inlet and Eclipse Sound stocks.

I would further like to inform the Board that the Department conducted satellite tagging studies in Admiralty Inlet and Eclipse Sound in late August, and aerial survey work has occurred in the Eclipse Sound and Admiralty Inlet areas. DFO scientists are currently assessing the possible effects of the two ice entrapments in Eclipse Sound (2008 and 2015), which resulted in the

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humane harvest of 624 and 231 narwhal, respectively. However, it is unlikely that results from the 2016 aerial surveys and satellite tagging studies will be peer-reviewed and subsequently published before 2018.

My staff will be in contact with you to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. LeBlanc', with a stylized, cursive script.

Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., M.P.