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Mr. Johnny Tookalook  
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Mr. Roderick Pachano  
Chair  
Eeyou Istchee Marine Region  
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Grand Council of the Crees  
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Dear Sirs:

I am writing to you in regard to the harvest and management of polar bears within the Southern Hudson Bay subpopulation, in which your organizations each play a role.

We are all aware of the importance of having a robust management system in place for polar bears across the Canadian North, and are all too familiar with the international scrutiny that we collectively face, particularly from the European Union.

I would like to start by commending the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (the Nunavik Board) on holding a successful public hearing regarding the establishment of a level of total allowable take for polar bears within the Nunavik Marine Region (the Region) in February 2014.

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In January 2012, my predecessor sent a request to the Nunavik Board to establish a formalized management system for polar bears in the Region. I am committed to the implementation of decisions made by the Nunavik Board (as per the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement), including the development of all necessary regulations and administrative tools in collaboration with my provincial and territorial partners. However, setting up the required structure and process will take time, and it is in our best interest to come to a voluntary agreement until such time as a formal management system can be put in place in Nunavik.

Based on the latest survey results from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the subpopulation of bears in Southern Hudson Bay is estimated at 951 ( $\pm 177$ ) and, as such, a sustainable harvest would be approximately 42 bears per year. Given the pressing need to ensure the harvest from Southern Hudson Bay is sustainable, I request that the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (the Nunavut Board) also commence a process to re-examine the total allowable harvest from Southern Hudson Bay. Moreover, given the shared nature of this subpopulation, I ask that the Nunavik Board and the Nunavut Board co-ordinate decision making and that this be done in a timely fashion given the availability of new population data and the international pressure we face. I also note the importance of continued discussion between Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and Makivik Corporation on the allocation of the total permitted harvest from Southern Hudson Bay by Inuit of Nunavut and Inuit of Nunavik as this is required for the success of any harvest agreement.

As you are aware, as a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Canada is obligated to demonstrate that the harvest and export of CITES-listed species is not detrimental to the survival of the species before export permits can be issued. If export does not meet the CITES criteria, Environment Canada cannot make a non-detriment finding, and export will not be permitted. The Department communicates the basis for its non-detriment finding decisions in a standing non-detriment finding document and has a duty to promptly reflect any new information in its non-detriment findings.

Polar bear non-detriment findings are especially scrutinized and any deficiencies in our assessment may trigger further restrictions from certain countries and could affect Canada's ability to maintain overall international trade of polar bears. Environment Canada will use the new Southern Hudson Bay information provided by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources in its standing non-detriment finding. If a voluntary agreement cannot be reached by the end of September 2014, Environment Canada would be required to initiate the non-detriment finding process with the objective of updating the standing non-detriment finding in advance of the 2014/15 harvest season. Certainty on sustainable harvest levels is essential to preserve the integrity of our national



exports, and prevent an export ban. You will be aware that export from the Baffin Bay subpopulation has been banned since 2010. A second ban from Southern Hudson Bay would significantly weaken our position at the next CITES Conference of the Parties in 2016.

I have been asked by representatives from Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and Makivik to engage in this matter personally, and I am willing to do so if and when needed. Representatives from Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and Makivik have also asked that a meeting take place between Environment Canada officials and officials from the various organizations to address the implementation of the Nunavik Board's decision. This meeting should also serve to resolve wildlife management board co-ordination and allocation issues. My officials will engage further with you on this matter.

I am confident that we are collectively committed to finding appropriate solutions to any issues that we may be faced with pertaining to the management of wildlife species in Canada, and I am encouraged by the good work already done by all parties involved in the management of polar bears in Southern Hudson Bay.

I look forward to personally engaging with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leona Aglukkaq', with a stylized flourish above it.

The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of the Environment

c.c.: The Honourable Johnny Mike, M.L.A.  
The Honourable Yves-François Blanchet, M.N.A.  
The Honourable David Oraziotti, M.P.P.  
Mr. Terry Audla, President, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami