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Minister of Environment
Ministaat Avatiliqiyitkut
Ministre de l'Environnement

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

Translation To follow

January 6, 2020

Re: Proposal to Approve the Baffin Island Caribou Management Plan

Dear Mr. Shewchuk,

Thank you very much for your letter dated October 8, 2019 concerning the Department of Environment's (DOE) request for approval of the Baffin Island Caribou Management Plan (BICMP). Regarding the concerns raised by yourself and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB), I would like to provide some context and responses to your specific points.

The Board indicated that there was a "lack of specific management actions to address current threats to Baffin Island caribou". Specific management recommendations such as Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) levels, which are based on scientific information, traditional knowledge, and consultation with co-management partners, were indeed not included in the management plan. This is because the wildlife management system in Nunavut requires that the NWMB and co-management partners have an opportunity to comment on management recommendations. It is our position that if specific management actions were provided within the management plan, this would be overly prescriptive and create a redundancy, or even a conflict, with the NWMB's existing approval process.

Your letter indicated, "the management plan has not been updated to include recent changes to Baffin Island harvest non-quota limitations". Due to the short timeframe between the decision on the Baffin Island TAH and Non-Quota Limitation, it was overlooked as an addition to the BICMP before the submission deadline for the NWMB regular meeting in September 2019. Changes to the non-quota limitations will be added to the Baffin Island Caribou Management Plan before it is re-submitted to the NWMB.

The final point made by the NWMB was that "the QWB did not provide and comment on the content of the proposed management plan. Even though your department accommodated the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Boards (QWB) requests for extensions in three instances". This plan has been in circulation since 2005 and has undergone multiple rounds of consultations with the more recent consultations taking place with comanagement partners, including the QWB, at the beginning of 2019. We recognize the need for co-management partners to have ample opportunity to provide input. Unfortunately, QWB has not responded by December 13, 2019 and the comment period was extended to accommodate QWB's request for this extension; which has created further delays in the approval process.

The DOE appreciates the Board providing a date by which QWB should respond. Unfortunately, as noted the December 13, 2019 deadline has passed without QWB providing any input on the BICMP.

I would like to thank the Board for their consideration of this plan and for their willingness to work together with us on the conservation and management of Baffin Island caribou during this critical, recovery phase for their population.

Sincerely,

Joe Savikataaq,

Minister of Environment

Cc. Jimmy Noble Jr., Deputy Minister of Environment Steve Pinksen, Assistant Deputy Minister of Environment Drikus Gissing, Director of Wildlife