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Building Nunavut Together
Nunavutluqatigiingniq
Bâtir le Nunavut ensemble

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Department of Economic Development & Transportation
Pivalliyuliyikkut Ingilrayuliyitkullu
Ministère du Développement économique et des Transports

September 24, 2013

Sharon Ehaloak
P.O Box 2101
Cambridge Bay, NU
X0B 0C0
Sent via email

RE: Nunavut Land Use Plan Workshop September 17th to 19th, 2013

Dear Mrs. Ehaloak,

Thank you for the invitation to the workshop that was scheduled on September 17th to 19th, 2013 in Cambridge Bay. Unfortunately the Government of Nunavut (GN)-Department of Economic Development and Transportation (ED&T) was unable to participate in these sessions due to operational requirements; however, the Department would like to provide support by way of this letter.

In the October 2012 Community Engagement Strategy, the Nunavut Planning Commission encourages comments on the location of mineral exploration and production; oil and gas exploration and production; and areas of commercial fisheries. Of particular interest to ED&T is the limited information regarding Nunavut's resource potential and the need for further geoscience knowledge.

This is evident by the Government of Canada's recent renewal for the Geo-mapping for Energy and Minerals (GEM) program that the Government of Canada is committed to provide geoscience knowledge. This geoscience knowledge is necessary for private sector exploration companies to guide investment decisions, as well as for use by governments to make informed land use decisions such as the creation of parks and other protected areas.

In highlighting the renewal of this major initiative, our government would like to bring to your attention a Policy Statement of *Parnautiit: A Foundation for the Future, Nunavut Mineral Exploration and Mining Strategy*. Policy Statement 1-2, Land Access Restrictions, states:

"The Government of Nunavut will require a review and assessment to determine whether a proposed land access restriction is warranted. The GN will endeavour to ensure the goals of the proposed land access restriction are achieved while minimizing the impact on undiscovered mineral resources. The review and assessment will take into account GN goals, legislation, policies and programs relating to conservation, land-use planning, wildlife management and

parks. This review and impact assessment will be required before a land access restriction is created."

While *Parnautiit* is a GN priority, the Department respectfully requests that, prior to the creation of additional areas of conservation as recommended throughout the draft Land Use Plan, the NPC considers allowing adequate time for the completion of the mineral assessments prior to the designation of these areas.

A common outcome of formal land use planning processes in other jurisdictions has been the creation of 'access restriction areas' for mineral exploration and mining. It is recognized that access restrictions may be appropriate in order to meet important conservation or land use goals. However, in some cases exploration and development have been restricted over large areas without a substantiation of need or evidence that mineral exploration and mining would be in conflict with conservation or other land uses. These restrictions unnecessarily eliminate the potential benefit the territory may derive from the mineral wealth in the area.

As the GN's lead Department responsible for economic development and the largest GN supporter of economic activities and initiatives such as mineral exploration and the GEM program, the department looks forward to the timely completion of the Nunavut Land Use Plan.

Additionally, the Department is responsible for (1) transportation initiatives, (2) tourism development, and (3) support for the establishment and development of commercial fisheries. As you are aware, land use plans are the cornerstone to guiding economic development and a critical first step in providing certainty to those looking to do business in Nunavut. Furthermore, the Department supports the establishment of the Nunavut Planning Commission as a one-window entry point into the permitting process for mineral exploration and mining in Nunavut.

As we move forward with development, we must retain a balanced and sustainable approach to development. The *Mineral Exploration and Mining Strategy* charts a plan-of-action to draft appropriate policy and to implement progressive, supporting programs to help us achieve our objectives. To Nunavummiut, mining companies, and investors, the message and spirit of *Parnautiit* is clear: We will be prepared for the arrival of a new era of mining development in our land. The completion of a first-generation Nunavut Land Use Plan will assist in providing direction and increased certainty in support of responsible resource development.

I would also like to emphasize that the GN must take a comprehensive and strategic approach to promoting sustainable economic development and environmental stewardship. Recognizing the role that Inuit land claim organizations have in environment and resource management, the GN will fulfill our responsibilities in a timely way, coordinated with our partners to support



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efficient and effective land use planning, environmental assessment and water licensing processes. The GN continues to support the existing regulatory processes as set out in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement as a comprehensive, inclusive, and effective means of evaluating projects in Nunavut on a case-by-case basis.

Should you require additional information or need clarification on any of the above comments, please contact me Pauloosie Suvega by phone at 867-975-7822 or by email at psuvega@gov.nu.ca.

Qujannamiik,

Pauloosie Suvega
Associate Deputy Minister
Economic Development and Transportation