ᕿᑭᖅᑖᓗᒃᑦ ᐅᒪᔪᓕᕆᔨᒃᑯᑦ ᑎᑎᕋᐃᐊ

Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board

To: Premier Taptuna
All Members of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

Re: The Necessity of Protecting Caribou Grounds for Inuit

My name is James Qillaq and I am the Chairperson of the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (QWB). QWB is a Regional Wildlife Organization (RWO), and is responsible for supporting and representing the Hunter and Trapper Associations of the Qikiqtaaluk. Our mandate is outlined within Article 5 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. We focus on wildlife management and harvesting for this region and we work closely with the HTAs to fulfill this responsibility. QWB is made up of myself and the Chairs of the 13 HTA's of this regions. We have 4 staff members and we work closely with out co management partners.

QWB has worked hard over the years to solidify our working relationship with the HTOs, while respecting their autonomy and their responsibility to their membership. As you know, HTO membership is open to all beneficiaries of Nunavut that are over 16 years old. We have an extensive and important range of members connected to our organizations. In understanding this, we are an important voice of Inuit on wildlife and environment matters.

QWB is writing to you today to stress the importance of caribou for Inuit. The protection of caribou grounds is paramount to Inuit in Nunavut and it must be guaranteed into the future. This is why QWB has participated in various technical meetings of the Nunavut Planning Commission. As we have stated, caribou grounds, particularly calving grounds, but also post-calving grounds, migration routes and access corridors are central to the vitality of caribou populations. We make this statement recognizing that our region has a diverse caribou population and experiences. The communities of the High Arctic are working with the federal government to develop a recovery strategy for Peary Caribou; communities on Baffin Island have been struggling with low caribou numbers all the while reinforcing the importance of protection for caribou grounds, and finally, there are reindeer in Sanikiluaq. What is consistent across the Qikiqtaaluk is the importance of caribou habitat. This is well understood in this region, proven by QIA's 2015 has resolution calling for the protection of caribou calving grounds in the Land Use Plan. At our 2015 AGM, QWB also passed a resolution calling for the protection caribou grounds. I have included a copy of that resolution here for your information.

ᕿᑭᖅᑖᓗᒃ ᐆᒪᔪᓕᕆᔨᒃᑯᑦ ᑎᑎᕋᐃᐊ

Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board

QWB is very deliberate in specifically identifying caribou grounds for protection. We feel this is a necessary strategy for supporting caribou populations. We do not feel that relying on protection measures alone will do the work necessary to support caribou populations.

Inuit want to caribou grounds protected within the Nunavut Land Use Plan. Arguing otherwise would completely disrespect the multiple conversations Inuit have been involved in with a full range of co management partners over multiple decades. With this being said, many communities recognize and argue that development into the future is necessary and desirable, but not at the expense of the health and vitality of wildlife, particularly caribou. All organizations in Nunavut are tasked with the responsibility of supporting sustainable development in Nunavut. We believe part of the solution can be found in respecting restrictions on caribou grounds. Please note, caribou restrictions does not limit all development in Nunavut.

I would encourage you, and all members of the legislative assembly to contact their own regional wildlife board for insight and advice on wildlife matters, particularly as they related to caribou grounds. Please contact me if you would like to discuss this further. Such discussions can be organized through my staff: Jason Mikki at (867) 928 8430 or nqwb@niws.ca, or Jackie Price at (867) 979 4631 or jprice@niws.ca.

Thank you,

J. Qillaq

James Qillaq, Chair
Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board

CC: Stanley Adjun, Kivalliq Wildilfe Board; Simon Qingnaqtuq, Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board; Paul Irngaut, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated; Jason Akearok, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board; Gabriel Nirlungayuk, Government of Nunavut & Andrew Nakashuk, Nunavut Planning Commission.