



Honourable John Duncan, Minister Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
Executive Offices
10 Wellington Street
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0H4

Dear Minister Duncan,

You indicated in your letter that the Government of Canada (GOC) finds that the plan has not met with your expectations. The Commission regrets that is the case, and acknowledges that there are aspects of it requiring improvement, but unfortunately, not for the reasons your letter suggests. To the extent that the draft plan needs improvement or does not meet the GOC's expectations, these deficiencies are not entirely due to the work of the Commission, but also originate with its planning partners in this process. While the Commission is sensitive to the concerns with the planning process you identify, numerous requests from the Commission to meet with GOC officials to ensure a mutual understanding of the planning process and to assist during the review of planning deliverables have gone unanswered. Inaction and delays, a surprising lack of cooperation and support from staff in various departments of the GOC and your Department's Nunavut Regional Office in particular, as well as a lack of timely provision of information by the Commission's other planning partners all had a bearing on the present status of the draft Nunavut Land Use Plan.

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intends to implement. To facilitate this, the Commission approached Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada on a number of occasions requesting extraordinary funding to assist our efforts to maximize this stakeholder engagement. These requests were denied. Given this, the Commission has undertaken to complete the Nunavut Land Use Plan and its obligations under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement within its existing funding levels.

Be that as it may, regarding the GOC's suggestion for a third party review of the plan, the Commission agrees that it may be beneficial for the GOC and other planning partners. For that reason, the Commission is willing to participate in such a review and to cooperate actively in it to achieve maximum benefit for all planning partners involved in the formulation of the draft Nunavut Land Use Plan.

In order for this proposed assessment to be of value, however, the Commission believes that the scope of the review must also include all the departments within the GOC which are engaged in the land use planning process, as well as the Government of Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Regional Inuit Associations. The Commission suggests that DPRA Canada be approached to assist with the review, as I understand that the GOC has worked with these consultants on land use planning matters in Nunavut. But whoever is selected to conduct the independent review, the parties need to agree on terms of reference and scope. Also, agreement that the resulting final assessment document will be provided to all parties absent vetting, editing or comment from others, is of utmost importance. In short, the assessment must be truly transparent and independent.

However, in the meantime, the Commission has directed that its staff commence the consultation process mandated by Article 11.5.3. This process will start in January of 2012. I understand from staff of the Commission who spoke with Robin Aitken on a conference call on September 22, 2011, that he advised that such an independent review could be completed by Christmas of this year. Its completion prior to the public consultation process can thus address the GOC's request while at the same time ensuring the Commission meets its obligations under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. The Commission feels that given the difficulties mentioned earlier regarding the lack of assistance in the plan's development, waiting would accomplish little and certainly not allow the Commission to meet its obligations under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

In closing, I will look forward to receiving more detail on the independent review. The Nunavut Planning Commission looks forward to engaging in the third party review process and to its continued participation with the Government of Canada in our shared goal of achieving a successful planning process.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ron Roach".

Ron Roach
Chairperson

CC:

The Honourable Robert Nicholson, PC, QC, MP rob.nicholson@parl.gc.ca
The Honourable Peter Gordon Mackay, PC, QC, MP peter.mackay@parl.gc.ca
The Honourable Christian Paradis, PC, MP christian.paradis@parl.gc.ca
The Honourable Denis Lebel, PC, MP denis.lebel@parl.gc.ca
The Honourable Keith Ashfield, PC, MP keith.ashfield@parl.gc.ca
The Honourable Peter Kent, PC, MP peter.kent@parl.gc.ca
The Honourable Ed Fast, PC, MP ed.fast@parl.gc.ca
The Honourable Joe Oliver, PC, MP Joe.Oliver@parl.gc.ca
The Honourable Daniel Shewchuk, Minister DOE, GN DSheWchuk@GOV.NU.CA
Ms. Cathy Towntongie, President NTI ctowntongie@tunngavik.com