



Andrew Nakashuk
A/Chair, Nunavut Planning Commission

September 18, 2015

RE: Aqigiq HTO Submission for Nunavut Land Use Plan

Mr. Nakashuk,

Please accept the Aqigiq Hunters and Trappers Organizations' (HTO) submission for the Nunavut Land Use Plan. Aqigiq HTO held a meeting with hunters and Elders, as well as a radio call in show, to help inform our submission.

The Aqigiq HTO would like caribou calving grounds designated as protected areas, and special management designations for Chesterfield Inlet and the marine coastal areas. We would also like the NPC to conduct further mapping and planning workshops in our community in the future. We need better protection for our essential hunting areas, wildlife areas, and heritage areas.

It is very important that a land use plan provides proper protection for our community's hunting way of life. Wage employment is no doubt important for our future. However, wildlife harvesting will always be just as important. Workers earn wages that they use to feed families, but hunters catch animals that they share with the entire community. We want our grandchildren to grow up in a world where their community freezer is always full of good meat, and no one has to go hungry. Hunting is central to our economic wellbeing.

Thank you very much for considering our proposal.

Barney Aggark
Chair
Aqigiq Hunters and Trappers Organization

CC:

Cathy Towtongie, President, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
David Ningeongan, President, Kivalliq Inuit Association
Stanley Adjuk, Chair, Kivalliq Wildlife Board
Earl Evans, Chair, Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board
Jonathan Savoy, Senior Planner, Nunavut Planning Commission
Peter Scholz, Senior Planner, Nunavut Planning Commission
Karla Letto, Wildlife Biologist, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
Leah Muckpah, Regional Coordinator, Kivalliq Wildlife Management Board



Aqiqiq HTO Submission for Nunavut Land Use Plan

Protected Area – Caribou Calving Grounds

Our community has repeatedly called for caribou calving grounds to be designated as protected areas. Mining and mineral exploration activity should be banned in calving grounds.

This request for protection is based in traditional teachings, passed on to us from our ancestors. Our Elders have always taught us to respect caribou calving grounds. We were taught to leave caribou calving grounds alone, and not to hunt or camp in these areas. They did this so the herds would thrive. Our community is not going to stop trying to protect these areas, it is a part of our culture. Our Elders would like the next generations to learn and respect traditional teachings, and to hunt caribou as we always have. If mining were to occur in the calving grounds, it would cause the herds to decline. Our hunters have already observed the impacts of mineral exploration activity on caribou herds near our community. We see helicopters disturb caribou in the inlet, and we are seeing many caribou calves without mothers. If mining were to occur in calving grounds, we believe the impacts would be much more severe.

Special Management Area – Coastal Marine Zone

The sea ice near Chesterfield Inlet is very important for walrus hunting, seal hunting, and polar bear migration. Icebreaking shipping could be detrimental to the community's harvesting activities. Icebreaking shipping near our community should be banned.

Special Management Area – Chesterfield Inlet

Chesterfield Inlet – from Baker Lake to Hudson Bay – is a heavily used area for community harvesting. Fishing, marine mammal hunting (seals and whales) and caribou hunting are regular activities in this area throughout the year.

The community has already been greatly affected by the increased marine shipping associated with the Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd. Meadowbank gold mine. Since shipping began, we have been noticing fewer and fewer marine mammals in this area during the shipping season. Observations of these impacts by hunters from Chesterfield Inlet and Baker Lake are well documented (see Appendix A).

We request the NPC designate the inlet a special management area. A cap should be placed on the amount of ships permitted through the inlet each shipping season. We propose that the current volume of shipping be considered as a possible maximum.



Community Areas of Interest

There are many areas of importance to our community that require special management. Our community is still greatly dependent on traditional harvest, and our hunters travel and harvest over vast areas of land, water, and sea ice. We need a land use plan that will protect essential harvesting areas and essential wildlife habitat. Chesterfield Inlet is in the process of developing a commercial fishery for Arctic Char, and have already invested greatly in a local fish plant. Char spawning grounds must be protected to ensure that this economic development is not threatened by incompatible land uses. There are also many heritage sites that the Elders would like protected from destruction by the mining industry. However, there are no protected or special management areas in the vicinity of Chesterfield Inlet in your draft plan.

The HTO does not have the capacity or resources to draft a plan of this sort. We feel it is the NPC's responsibility to develop a plan that will protect our interests. However, the NPC only conducted brief community mapping sessions in Chesterfield Inlet. We request the NPC commit to conducting extensive and thorough community mapping and planning workshops in the future. These mapping workshops should be used to amend the land use plan, to give our community the protection we deserve.

Appendix A

Documented Traditional Knowledge of Meadowbank Gold Mine Marine Shipping Impacts on Marine Mammals in Chesterfield Inlet

NIRB, Final Hearing Transcript for AEM's Meliadine Proposal: Volume 4

Leo Mimialik (Chesterfield Inlet) "Also, the seal population is declining because there's too many shipping -- there's too much shipping, and there will be some compensation to Inuit if there are any impacts to sea mammals. I think you guys should look forward to us applying for compensation because there are already impacts." (981)

Leo Mimialik (Chesterfield Inlet) "Just a while ago -- or a long time ago, my ancestors, when I was a child, they used to hunt a lot of seals. There was an abundance of seals. Today, since there is a lot of shipping traffic and we call it sonic, maybe perhaps there's a -- somewhere is a disturbance in the shipping companies that we will -- and we may sight one or two seals in the summertime, and we have realized that we, as harvesters in Chesterfield Inlet, or the harvesters has been impacted by having no seals. Now, not only Chesterfield Inlet people have been noticing that there's a decline of population of seals. Even people in Rankin Inlet are noticing that the -- the seals are declining in population, and it's known for a fact that people from Chesterfield Inlet and Rankin Inlet are fully aware that the decline -- declination of the population of seals." (1066)

NIRB, Public Information Meeting Summary Report for the Review of Agnico-Eagle Mines Ltd's Meliadine Gold Project (2013)

Chesterfield Inlet:

"the Inuit and environment has already been impacted. We have no more seals and fewer whales." (13)

"Food security is affected by marine traffic" (13)

NIRB, Final Hearing Transcript for AREVA's Kiggavik Proposal, Volume 6

David Toolooktook (Baker Lake) "In the last few years, ever since the Agnico started transporting their supplies, we have been having or noticing that there's very few seals." (1252)

NIRB, Final Hearing Transcript for AREVA's Kiggavik Proposal, Volume 7

David Aksawnee (Baker Lake) "We are using the same shipping route that the ships and barges use. We travel through the narrows as well, and we get all the way -- we travel all the way to Chesterfield Inlet. There are some people that are going whaling. (...) Before exploration started happening, we were able to see an abundance of seals, and we were able to catch lots of fish. We used to be a good fishing spot. But today, we don't see too many Arctic char being caught by nets. We don't see too many seals either." (1615)

Leo Mimimalik (Chesterfield Inlet) "To me, there's going to be a lot of effects to the sea mammals, such as seals. We've noticed that already. Once they -- the ships from -- delivering materials and -- with Agnico company. Are you saying, once they start going back and forth, we've noticed the disturbance already near Chesterfield Inlet. The full-time -- the full-time hunters in Chesterfield and full-time hunters in Baker Lake know when the animals are more." (1512)

NIRB, Final Hearing Transcript for AREVA's Kiggavik Proposal, Volume 8

Thomas Elytook (Baker Lake) "I hunted down between Chester and Baker when we had the horses and chestnut canoes. I've been hunting down there. I love the land. And before the -- before that, it was -- driving by, we see seal here, seal there, you know. And then when Agnico started barging in there, it stopped. It's very hard to find seal now. Sometimes we don't see anything come back. Same with caribou." (1880)

NIRB, Public Information Meeting Summary Report for the Review of AREVA Resources Canada Inc Kiggavik Project: (2012)

Chesterfield Inlet:

"When AEM started shipping to Baker Lake, there was an increase in marine traffic with all the barges, tugs and ships going non-stop in the inlet. (...) All this created noise pollution driving the marine mammals and fish away, affecting Chesterfield Inlet." (34)

NIRB, Preliminary Hearing Conference Decision Concerning the Kiggavik Project. (2013)

"It was stated that marine traffic is already impacting the marine mammal population near Chesterfield Inlet, and that mine-related marine traffic will only worsen the situation." (18)

AREVA, Final EIS for Proposed Kiggavik Uranium Mine: Volume 3, IQ Study

Chesterfield Inlet:

“In the past, seals were hunted year round although the spring was the most common hunting season (IQ-Riewe 1992:173). At the 2011 community review meeting it was reported that seals travel north or south of Chesterfield Inlet in the summer, and that during this time they are not found near Chesterfield Inlet; the interview participants suspected that this is due to barge travel (IQ-CIHT 2011). The HTO representatives at the 2011 meeting commented that the number of seals has decreased over the past few years (IQCIHT 2011). It was then reiterated in 2014 that it’s hard to catch seals in the inlet now (not caught in the last 2 years) now that ships going up inlet (IQ-CI HTO Feb 2014).” (4-30)

“During interviews, Elders said that beluga whales used to come into the harbour at Chesterfield in August, but come only occasionally now as there is too much noise from boat motors. The amount of barge traffic has increased over the last two years and this has also negatively affected the beluga whale population (CI04 2009; CI08 2009, IQ-CI HTO 201438). In 2014, HTO members said that they were not able to catch enough beluga for their families in 2013 (IQ-CI HTO 2014). Seals are also affected by noise from marine transportation and because of the increase of barge traffic in Chesterfield Inlet there are fewer seals in the inlet (IQ-CI04 2009; CI05 2009, IQ-CI HTO 201439)” (4-31)

“People in Chesterfield are very concerned about the effects of increased marine traffic on the marine mammals living in Chesterfield Inlet. For example, many of the people believe that increased marine traffic in the inlet resulting from existing projects has already caused many beluga whales and seals to move away, and further increases will make the problem worse (IQ-CI01 2009; CI04 2009; CI05 2009; CI07 2009; CI08 2009; CI09 2009; CIHT 2009; CIHT 2011, IQ-CI HTO Feb 201442). There was particular concern expressed about the impacts of barging on beluga whales, seals and fish at the 2011 community review meeting. The HTO representatives at the 2011 meeting said that they believe project shipping will cause the marine mammals to leave Chesterfield Inlet and therefore the hunters will have to travel farther to reach them; they believe that this is already happening because of existing projects” (4-35)

**NPC, Summary of Community Meetings on the Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan,
Chesterfield Inlet (2014)**

“Used to have a lot of seals in the area. Since the mine in Baker Lake started shipping through Chesterfield Inlet we never see seals in the summer anymore, only see them in the winter after the ships go.” (17)

“No sea mammals since the shipping started for the mine. Sea mammals are disturbed by the vibration, noise pollution from the ship.” (17)

“Chesterfield Inlet has been greatly impacted by companies. We have heavy ship traffic and our mammals have disappeared.” (18)

The entire inlet is “losing sea mammals since Agnico Eagle came” (21)