



Athabasca Denesuline Negotiation Team

March 1, 2016

Percy Kabloona, Acting Chair
Nunavut Planning Commission
P.O. Box 2101
Cambridge Bay NU X0B 0C0
Sent by E-mail: sehaloak@nunavut.ca

RE: Athabasca Denesuline submission to the Caribou Technical Session - Nunavut Land Use Plan

Mr. Kabloona,

The AD would like to ensure that our voice is heard at the Caribou Technical Session that is occurring March 7-9, 2016 in Iqaluit, NU. Logistics and funding prevent us from attending this most important gathering. We request that our written contribution be taken into account during this session, and incorporated into the Final NLUP. Athabasca Denesuline (AD) culture, history and way of life are highly dependent on the health of the Beverly, Ahiak, Bathurst and Qaminirjuaq barrenground caribou herds. As you are aware, our traditional territory and land use extend into southwestern Nunavut. Therefore, we take great interest in the Nunavut Land Use Plan (NLUP), especially in regards to the protection of the barrenground caribou upon which we depend.

The AD Elders tell us through traditional knowledge and first hand experience that any activity that causes stress, or results in a change of usual behaviour and/or diversion of the migratory path of the caribou, can impact on the health and condition of these animals. This subsequently impacts on the AD communities that rely on these caribou for sustenance. Industrial activity and development is the first and foremost activity that causes this type of impact.

As we have stated before, the AD are pleased that the NPC has identified some of the area of the calving grounds as protected. However, opening up high mineral potential areas within calving grounds to development means that the Plan is not fully protecting the interests of communities that depend on caribou populations for culture, health and sustenance. As the NPC has heard time and time again from our communities, industrial

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activity/development and calving grounds cannot co-exist no matter what mitigation measures are in place.

While the proposed measures are better than in the previous draft NLUP, we do not think that this is adequate to protect the caribou herds. We are disappointed in the position that the NPC has taken and urge you to protect, at a minimum, the entirety of the calving grounds. We would like NPC to go even further and include a buffer that contains some post-calving areas. Our communities support the core calving and post calving areas as delineated by the Beverly Qaminirjuaq Caribou Management Board (BQCMB).

Caribou protection is especially important considering the changes in climate and environment that the herds are facing. This past winter, the AD have been directly impacted and witnessed a change in the migratory behaviour of both the Ahiak/Beverly and Qaminirjuaq herd. These changes cause hardship to both the caribou and the AD. The herds are facing situations that they have never experienced in the past. The calving grounds, which the AD consider sacred, should remain free of disturbance and activity. If the NLUP remains unchanged, there would be a lack of effective protection for the caribou themselves during calving and post-calving periods, when they are most vulnerable to disturbance.

Therefore to reiterate:

1. Caribou protection requires the prohibition of industrial development (including mineral exploration) within/on caribou calving areas and post-calving areas.
2. Restrictions on land use activities should be applied to protect caribou from disturbance effects of land use activities around key water crossings and along seasonal migration routes.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (306) 953-7287 or email: rrobillard@adnlc.ca.

Regards,



Ronald Robillard
President, Denesuline Né Né Land Corporation

cc.

Chief Rudy Adam, Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation

Chief Rick Robillard, Black Lake Denesuline First Nation

Chief Bart Tsannie, Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation