



NEWS RELEASE

Existing Nunavut Regulatory Processes Protect Caribou Herds

(Iqaluit, Nunavut – March 23, 2016) The NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines (the “Chamber”) is committed to provide input to governments and regulatory agencies on policy and legislation relating to mineral exploration and mine development. From March 7-10, the Nunavut Planning Commission held technical meetings in Iqaluit on proposed protection measures for caribou in the *Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan*. The Chamber attended those meetings to provide the perspective of the exploration and mining industry and to listen to the views of other stakeholders and planning partners.

Exploration has been at all-time lows for over eight years in the NWT and it is approaching that now in Nunavut. Some caribou populations are declining in Northern regions in areas with and without development. “No definitive link has been established between the current decline in caribou populations across the North and exploration or mining,” says Gary Vivian, President of the Chamber.

The Chamber agrees with the Government of Nunavut’s position that, with effective mitigation measures and monitoring programs, mineral exploration and development activities can co-exist with sustainable development in caribou calving grounds and access corridors. In addition, the Chamber is comfortable that the existing Nunavut regulatory regime allows for all stakeholders and communities to participate in the review and shaping of well-designed mineral exploration and development projects that are protective of wildlife. “This is a cautious approach that makes sense,” said Vivian.

“We recognize that mining projects in Nunavut will likely interact with caribou,” explains Vivian, “however Northerners should know that for many years now, industry has been subject to stringent Northern regulatory processes designed to ensure that there are no significant adverse environmental effects on caribou. These can include reducing or modifying activities at important times such as the calving season.”

The minerals industry is committed to planning and designing projects in collaboration with stakeholders to avoid or minimize potential effects to caribou populations and habitat. Caribou protection measures have been applied across Nunavut for many years. Environmental baseline and environmental assessment studies on advanced exploration and mining projects continue to analyze potential project and cumulative effects on Nunavut’s caribou populations. Environmental assessments have been completed and reviewed that include sections devoted to the Bathurst, Beverly, Ahiak, Qamanirjuaq and Wager Bay caribou herds.

Caribou protection plans have been developed through a regulated and collaborative process with input from governments, regulatory bodies, Regional Inuit Associations, Hunter and Trapper Associations, communities, and industry. Through the Nunavut Impact Review Board review process, industry is leading many efforts in studying and monitoring the effects of exploration and mining activities on caribou. Industry continually adapts to new information and new approaches to monitoring and reducing those impacts.

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