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August 1, 2007

Dr. Joseph Justus, Director of Wildlife Management
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
Box 1379
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0

Dear Dr. Justus,

During our meeting in Iqaluit on July 5, 2007 you requested a letter outlining the role that the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) could play in the Nunavut land use planning process. The purpose of this letter is to outline considerations related to the NWMB's involvement.

Wildlife is a focal consideration for land use planning in Nunavut because it is central to Inuit land use and well-being. Subsection 11.8.1 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement states that land use plans shall be developed and implemented in a manner consistent with Article 5. As such, it is important that the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC) work closely with the NWMB to ensure that requirement is achieved.

The NWMB has three important roles to play in Plan development: identification of issues, goals and potential solutions; provision of wildlife data; and review of intermediate and final planning documents.

We are initiating a new Nunavut wide planning process this summer. Steps 1 and 2 are the identification of land use issues, vision and goals. We would rely on the expertise of wildlife organizations such as the NWMB to identify goals for Nunavut's wildlife, issues related to or affecting wildlife, and later, potential solutions to those issues.

It is important that the NPC base its decisions on the best available information. We look to the NWMB to help us identify important wildlife areas within Nunavut from both an ecological (critical habitat) and cultural (harvest areas) standpoint, and to be a primary source of wildlife information. This will also be important for advancing the Nunavut General Monitoring Plan as we discussed. When we begin information gathering and have identified specific information needs, we will be following up with you to discuss your wildlife data and information. We have already begun to review the wildlife harvest and bowhead whale studies you provided us.

As we complete the various steps of the planning process, we will send out documents to our planning partners for review and comment. The feedback we receive guides the development of the Plan and ensures that the final product reflects the needs and priorities of participants. By participating in these reviews and providing constructive feedback, the NWMB can ensure that the plan is accurate, is consistent with Article 5, and will achieve the desired wildlife goals for the Nunavut Settlement Area.

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There are benefits to the active and early participation of the NWMB in this planning process. Firstly, land use planning can provide your organization with an opportunity to advance wildlife related goals in Nunavut. Identification of appropriate wildlife goals in the Plan will ensure that these are a consideration in future land use decisions.

Secondly, land use planning may result in clear direction for regulators regarding minimum requirements or considerations needed to protect wildlife and promote wildlife related goals. Planning provides a unique forum for discussion and resolution of broad land use issues amongst communities, government, Inuit organizations, industry and other interested planning partners. This collaborative and inclusive approach, large geographic area, emphasis on long-term goals, and requirements for research provide opportunities to resolve broad complex issues, such as cumulative effects, that are not well suited to project-specific reviews.

Thirdly, land use plans can improve consistency and efficiency in land use decisions affecting wildlife. Approved land use plans guide and direct resource use and development in the Nunavut Settlement Area. By including clear direction on key wildlife issues, they may reduce the number of wildlife related issues that need to be addressed through project-specific screening and reviews. This saves all participants time and money, and can provide greater consistency and coordination in management and mitigation of wildlife impacts from land use across the Nunavut Settlement Area.

Participation in the planning process will involve reviewing planning reports or documents and providing feedback approximately every 6 to 12 months; and participating in periodic meetings, workshops and public hearings as your schedule allows. NPC will endeavour to publicize these participation periods well in advance to give your organization the opportunity to schedule time to participate. Ideally, our organizations will have regular communications between these formal periods to keep each other informed, seek clarification on questions related to each other's areas of interest or expertise, and work cooperatively to advance our mutual goals.

We look forward to the involvement of the NWMB in our planning process. Should you have any questions related to your involvement, please don't hesitate to contact me at hwiebe@npc.nunavut.ca or (867) 983-4631.

Respectfully,



Heidi Wiebe
Policy Specialist

Cc: Jim Noble, Executive Director, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
Sharon Ehaloak, Executive Director, Nunavut Planning Commission
Adrian Boyd, Director of Policy, Nunavut Planning Commission