



Tannis Bolt  
Assistant Technical Advisor  
Nunavut Impact Review Board  
Cambridge Bay, NU  
Delivered by email

**Re: Notice of part 4 of Screening for Canadian Arctic Holidays: Response to QIA response**

Aug 21, 2013

Dear Tannis,

I would like to respond to the comments from Bernie MacIsaac of the QIA.

Firstly I will clarify that Canadian Arctic Holidays Inc operates Arctic Watch Lodge. It is a family run business operating since 2000 on Somerset Island. Operating any tourism business in the High Arctic with short seasons and high costs is a work of passion and not a road to riches. Our children are the third generation of our family to work in the arctic.

**Community Benefits**

Regarding the fact that our guests do not stop over in Resolute, it is simply a matter of economics. The cost of flying from Ottawa to Resolute is over \$4000. Combine this with the cost of two charters of a twin otter to fly between Resolute and Arctic Watch and the total is more than people are willing to pay. Since we took over Arctic Watch in 2000, the cost of both of these flights has risen by about 400%. We simply cannot afford to operate with such high costs.

Perhaps the Resolute CLARC should talk to First Air or Kenn Borek Air regarding flight costs. As a matter of comparison, a \$4000 plane ticket is the equivalent of an around-the-world plane ticket with most commercial airlines.

## **Employment**

We hire young people from across the country to work at Arctic Watch. People look at our web site and apply. We look at the credentials and hire people accordingly. People from Resolute Bay can apply to work at Arctic Watch as much as anyone else. A person from Resolute working at Arctic Watch would require the same qualifications as anyone else, such as wilderness first aid, Canada Firearms course and anyone going on the water requires the appropriate certification. These requirements are necessary for our insurance. The level of pay would also be the same.

Furthermore, we created a registered charity call the Arctic Watch Beluga Foundation whose mission is to support education and science. For two years the charity has run a youth educational outdoor program at Arctic Watch. The principle beneficiaries are the youth of Resolute and Nunavut who participate for free. The Foundation has also sponsored scientific research of beluga whales and botany (the science was conducted by the Sea Research Foundation and the Canadian museum of Nature). Finally the Foundation has planned a solar powered satellite Internet beluga camera whose feed is to be carried across Nunavut and various institutions such as the Canadian Museum of Nature (support letters attached). This is a benefit not only to the people Resolute but to all of residents of Nunavut and all Canadians. The specific section of our web site relating to the Foundation is <http://www.arcticwatch.ca/social-responsibility/>

## **Wildlife Disruption**

Regarding the statement “undoubtedly cause impact to local populations of whales, muskox and caribou”. This statement is completely preposterous and without foundation. The principle reason that people come from around the world to Somerset Island is to see wildlife. Arctic Watch Lodge needs wildlife. Any actions that would disrupt wildlife would be paramount to shooting ourselves in the foot. We can say that the local population of muskox has increased in recent years. Scientists now monitor the population of beluga whales. We have not seen any caribou except for one sighting 1999. There are no caribou in this area. We do not do any hunting. Conservation is our ultimate goal and essential to the survival of Arctic Watch Lodge and tourism in Nunavut.

Aleeasuk Idlout, who grew up on Somerset Island and now lives in Resolute Bay visited Arctic Watch for one week in 2012. Aleeasuk can to serve as a reference as to how careful we are not to disturb wildlife.

The suggestion to employ an “Inuit wildlife observer to detect and mitigate wildlife impacts” is insulting. Firstly why is an Inuit better at “detecting and mitigating wildlife impacts” than a white person who has years of experience on Somerset Island and a lifetime of experience in the Arctic? Our staff is well trained, certified

and experienced. At Arctic Watch, we have a trained german shepard dog to keep away bears. We have never had any trouble with wildlife because our staff is well trained and we take precautions.

### **Community Consultation**

In 2010, we invited the Resolute CLARC to visit Arctic Watch. During that visit we attempted to talk about the issues that bothered the committee members. However the committee leaders did not want to talk about any of their concerns. A confrontational tone was used by certain members of the CLARC, despite being completely open during their visit at Arctic Watch.

The QIA suggested “ that CAH make every effort to schedule their project activities appropriately based on information based on consultation with local residents, so as to ensure that project activities will not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.” We are well aware of the rules regarding Inuit and wildlife harvesting. Arctic Watch Lodge operates annually from mid June to mid August on a specific area of Somerset Island. During this time residents of Resolute do not come to this area. Somerset Island and Resolute are separated by 80 kilometers of open water and loose ice. It is not practical to cross by boat during the annual period that Arctic Watch Lodge is open. No one has ever crossed from Resolute to Arctic Watch during the (almost) fifteen years we have been there. This is to say that the operation of Arctic Watch does not interfere with harvesting or traditional land uses. During the winter, we are well aware that hunters may (and do) come to this area to hunt. Every year we set up a cabin as an emergency shelter for winter travelers and hunters with a heater, fuel and food. Resolute hunters are aware of this shelter and in the past have taken advantage of it.

We are scheduled to meet with the CLARC in Resolute on Aug 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013.



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