



NIRB File No.: 18YN029

Previous File NIRB File No.: 17YN016

NPC File No.: 148813

June 1, 2018

Holly Morin
University of Rhode Island
218 South Ferry Road
Narragansett, RI 02879 USA

Sent via email: holly_morin@uri.edu

Re: Notice of Screening for University of Rhode Island's "URI Northwest Passage Project 2018" Project Proposal

Dear Holly Morin:

On April 24, 2018 the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) received a referral to screen University of Rhode Island's (URI) "URI Northwest Passage Project 2018" project proposal from the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC or Commission). The NPC noted that the previous conformity determination issued on February 10, 2017 (Previous NIRB File No. 17YN016) for the activities associated with the current proposal continues to apply and has determined that the project proposal requires screening by the NIRB because the proposal does not belong to a class of exempt works or activities set out in Schedule 12-1 of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)*.

Pursuant to Article 12, Sections 12.4.1 and 12.4.4 of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)* and section 87 of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*, S.C. 2013, c. 14, s. 2 (*NuPPAA*), the NIRB has commenced screening this project proposal and has assigned it file number **18YN029**.

INFORMATION REQUEST

On April 24, 2018 the NIRB requested that the Proponent complete the online application form through the NIRB's public registry system and ensure, pursuant to subsection 144(1) of the *NuPPAA*, that the information provided be sufficient to determine the scope of the project activities being proposed and that sufficient information has been provided to commence screening. Following a preliminary completeness check of the proposal as submitted, the NIRB

determined that the proposal did not contain the necessary information for the NIRB to carry out its screening and on May 15, 2018 requested that the Proponent provide the Board with the additional information in order to carry out the screening of the project proposal. On May 24, 2018 the NIRB received the required additional information and commenced the screening pursuant to Part 3 of the *NuPPAA*.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Scope:

The proposed “URI Northwest Passage Project 2018” project is located within the Qikiqtani (North Baffin) and Kitikmeot regions and encompasses several research sites from Resolute Bay, to Cambridge Bay via Bellot Strait, including Lancaster Sound, Pond Inlet and Iqaluit. The Proponent intends to study how waters of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago (CAA) have changed as a consequence of the secular warming trend over the Arctic Circle, during a scientific expedition aboard a research vessel (M/V *Akademik Ioffe*) along the Northwest Passage. The program is proposed to take place from August to September, 2018.

According to the project proposal, the scope of the project includes the following undertakings, works or activities:

- Utilize one (1) research vessel (M/V *Akademik Ioffe*) as a marine research platform for 36 personnel to conduct scientific expedition across the CAA;
- Undertake sailing and marine-based research activities along the Northwest Passage near the communities of Resolute Bay, Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet, Gjoa Haven, Cambridge Bay, Clyde River, Qikiqtarjuaq, Pangnirtung and Iqaluit;
 - Undertake shore landings during expedition stops to conduct land-based educational activities and videography;
 - Use different equipment and instrumentations (i.e. Acoustic Doppler Current Profile, autonomous glider, Conductivity, Temperature, Depth rosette, and Multibeam Echosounder) to monitor water conditions and collect bathymetric data along transits;
 - Use of onboard laser absorption spectrometers to measure stable isotopes of hydrogen and oxygen in seawater samples;
 - Conduct zooplankton net tows along the cruise track, and cataloguing of net contents in order to identify and quantify particles in seawater;
 - Perform seabird counts and characterize the distribution and abundance of marine birds including marine mammals along the survey route; and
 - Collection and analysis of air and water samples with onboard laser spectroscopy instruments, as well as incubation of water to study microbial activity.
- Use of various hazardous chemicals for sample preservation;
- Storage of hazardous chemical wastes onboard and subsequent disposal in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Inclusion or Exclusion of Scoping List

At this time, the NIRB has identified no additional works or activities in relation to the project proposal. As a result, the NIRB will proceed with screening the project based on the scope as described above.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

All documents received and pertaining to this project proposal can be obtained from the NIRB's online public registry at www.nirb.ca by using any of the following search criteria:

- Project Name: URI Northwest Passage Project 2018
- NIRB File No.: 18YN029
- Application No.: 125342

The documents received include:

- *NPC Screening Referral and Conformity Determination*
- *NPC Application*
- *NIRB's Online Application Form*
- *Northwest Passage Project Science Plan*
- *Description of Slocum Glider (Autonomous Underwater Vehicle)*
- *Description of Research Sonar Systems*
- *Maps noting proposed Cruise Track and Transects*
- *Northwest Passage Project Science Summaries in English, Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun, and French*

The NIRB will copy you on screening process related correspondence and upload related documents to the NIRB's online registry for public access. The NIRB may request additional information at any time during the process.

The NIRB is copying parties and municipalities potentially affected by University of Rhode Island project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **June 11, 2018**.

The NIRB would like parties to provide comments regarding:

- Whether the project proposal is likely to arouse significant public concern; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is likely to cause significant adverse eco-systemic or socio-economic effects; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is likely to cause significant adverse impacts on wildlife habitat or Inuit harvest activities; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is of a type where the potential adverse effects are highly predictable and mitigable with known technology, (and providing any recommended mitigation measures); and
- Any matter of importance to the Party related to the project proposal.

Please note that *proposed* project-specific terms and conditions, should the project proceed, have been attached for consideration and comment (**Appendix A**).

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please send your comments to the NIRB via email at info@nirb.ca, via fax at (867) 983-2594 or via the individual project dashboard for this assessment on the NIRB's online public registry at www.nirb.ca by using any of the following search criteria:

- Project Name: URI Northwest Passage Project 2018
- NIRB File No.: 18YN029
- Application No.: 125342

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact the undersigned at (867) 983-4603 or at samuno@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,



Solomon Amuno, PhD
Technical Advisor II
Nunavut Impact Review Board

cc: Distribution List
Stephen Williamson Bathory, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Salamonie Shoo, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Geoff Clark, Kitikmeot Inuit Association
Wynter Kuliktana, Kitikmeot Inuit Association
Lisa Pirie-Dominix, Canadian Wildlife Service
Mark D'Aguiar, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Attachments: Appendix A: *Proposed* Project Specific Terms and Conditions

Enclosures (6): Public Notice of Screening (English, Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun)
Comment Forms (English, Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun)

Appendix A
Proposed Project Specific Terms and Conditions

The following is a list of project-specific terms and conditions which, should the project proceed, may be recommended to be attached to any approval.

General

1. University of Rhode Island (the Proponent) shall maintain a copy of the Project Terms and Conditions at the site of operation at all times.
2. The Proponent shall forward copies of all permits obtained and required for this project to the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) prior to the commencement of the project.
3. The Proponent shall operate in accordance with all commitments stated in correspondence provided to the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC File No.: 148813), and the NIRB (Online Application Form, May 24, 2018; Project Description Summaries in English, Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun and French, May 24, 2018).
4. The Proponent shall operate the site in accordance with all applicable Acts, Regulations and Guidelines.

Waste Disposal

5. The Proponent shall keep all garbage and debris in bags placed in a covered metal container or equivalent until disposed of at an approved facility. All such wastes shall be kept inaccessible to wildlife at all times.

Fuel and Chemical Storage

6. The Proponent shall store all fuel and chemicals in such a manner that they are inaccessible to wildlife.
7. The Proponent shall ensure that all personnel are properly trained in fuel and hazardous waste handling procedures, as well as spill response procedures. All spills of fuel or other deleterious materials of any amount must be reported immediately to the 24 hour Spill Line at (867) 920-8130.

Wildlife - General

8. The Proponent shall ensure that there is no damage to wildlife habitat in conducting this operation.
9. The Proponent shall not harass wildlife. This includes persistently circling, chasing, hovering over pursuing or in any other way harass wildlife, or disturbing large groups of animals.
10. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.
11. The Proponent shall ensure that all project personnel are made aware of the measures to protect wildlife and are provided with training and/or advice on how to implement these measures.

Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance

12. The Proponent shall not disturb or destroy the nests or eggs of any birds. If nests are encountered and/or identified, the Proponent shall take precaution to avoid further interaction and or disturbance (e.g., a 100 metres buffer around the nests). If active nests of any birds are discovered (i.e., with eggs or young), the Proponent shall avoid these areas until nesting is complete and the young have left the nest.
13. The Proponent shall minimize activities during periods when birds are particularly sensitive to disturbance such as migration, nesting and moulting.
14. The Proponent shall avoid the seaward site of seabird colonies and areas used by flocks of migrating waterfowl by three (3) kilometres.

Caribou and Muskoxen Disturbance

15. The Proponent shall cease activities that may interfere with the migration or calving of caribou or muskox, until the caribou or muskox have passed or left the area.
16. The Proponent shall not block or cause any diversion to caribou migration, and shall cease activities likely to interfere with migration such as movement of equipment or personnel until such time as the caribou have passed.

Land Use

17. The Proponent shall ensure that the land use area is kept clean and tidy at all times.

Restoration of Disturbed Areas

18. The Proponent shall remove all garbage, fuel and equipment upon abandonment.
19. The Proponent shall ensure that all disturbed areas are restored to a stable or pre-disturbed state as practical as possible upon completion of field work.

Marine and Ship-based Activities

20. The Proponent shall not deposit, nor permit the deposit of any fuel, chemicals, wastes (including waste water) or sediment into any marine waters, and shall manage wastes on board the vessel prior to final disposal at approved port facilities.
21. The Proponent shall ensure that all researchers including all passengers (clients and staff) are aware of the Proponent's responsibilities and requirements regarding wildlife and wildlife habitat protection.
22. While on the research vessel, the Proponent shall limit viewing time of each concentration of marine mammals to a maximum of thirty (30) minutes in order to minimize disturbance.
23. The Proponent shall not attempt to intersect or interfere with the movements of marine mammals. Strategic positioning of vessels ahead of the path being traveled by mobile whales and waiting for the whales to pass is also prohibited.
24. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 100 metres if a polar bear is encountered on land or ice while conducting activities from a zodiac or other small craft; all interaction with polar bears should be avoided if possible.
25. The Proponent shall ensure that all passengers (clients and staff) are aware of the Proponent's responsibilities and requirements regarding archaeological or palaeontological sites that are

encountered during land-based activities. This should include pre-landing briefings explaining the prohibitions regarding removal of artifacts, and defacing or writing on rocks and infrastructure.

26. The Proponent should use existing trails where possible during project activities on land.
27. The Proponent is strongly advised to provide sufficient advance notice communities where a landing is planned as part of project activities.

Other

28. The Proponent should consult with local residents regarding their activities in the area and solicit available Inuit Qaujimaningit and information that can inform project activities.
29. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
30. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.