



NIRB File No.: 24YN026
NPC File No.: 150407

June 20, 2024

Alyssa Bohart
Government of Nunavut
P.O Box 1000, Stn 1310
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0

Sent via email: abohart@gov.nu.ca

Re: Notice of Screening for Government of Nunavut's "Estimating the abundance of the Foxe Basin polar bear subpopulation" project proposal

Dear Alyssa Bohart:

On May 24, 2024, the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral to screen the Government of Nunavut's (GN) "Estimating the abundance of the Foxe Basin polar bear subpopulation" project proposal from the Nunavut Planning Commission (Commission), which conforms to both the Keewatin Regional Land Use Plan and the North Baffin Regional Land Use Plan. On June 18, 2024, the NIRB received the complete application from the Proponent.

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 s. 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 **24YN026** - please reference this file number in all future related correspondence.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Scope:

Project:	Estimating the abundance of the Foxe Basin polar bear subpopulation
Region:	Within all three regions: Kitikmeot, Kivalliq and Qikiqtani (South Baffin)
Location:	Aerial surveys within the entire Foxe Basin area, within the municipal boundaries of the communities of: Baker Lake, Chesterfield Inlet, Coral Harbour, Nauyasat, Igloodik, Sanirajak, Kinngait, and Kimmirut.

Summary of Project Description:	The Proponent intends to conduct research to estimate the population abundance of the Foxe Basin polar bear subpopulation and characterization of polar bear movements between surrounding subpopulation boundaries.
Project Proposed Timeline:	July to August 2024

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

- Use of 2 helicopters for aerial surveys as well as travel between sites;
- Use of dart guns and biopsy darts to collect DNA samples (<5mm diameter) from polar bears from 0-15 meters distance;
- Set up and use of steel posts with barbed wire to collect hair samples from bears;
 - Use of scented bait to attract bears (no meat or food reward, ONLY scent)
 - Use of camera trap with security box to collect images of bears that hair is collected from.
- Possible use of up to 78 fuel caches (8 existing), each storing from 2 to 10 drums of fuel and up to a total of 324 drums, all throughout the Foxe Basin area;
- Use of two (2) existing ECCC camps: Niko camp and Prince Charles Island Camp during the life of the project;
 - Use of gasoline for generators at the camps.
- Hiring and training of local community members to lead community-led hair snare stations within municipal boundaries of the communities of Baker Lake, Chesterfield Inlet, Nauyasat, Igloodik, Sanirajak, Coral Harbour, Kinngait, and Kimmirut; and
- Use of local community services and facilities while in the eight (8) communities during the life of the project.

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 can be accessed from the NIRB's online public registry www.nirb.ca/project/125939 and include:

- *Commission Conformity Determination and Application*
- *Commission Questionnaire*
- *NIRB Application*
- *Cache Locations and 2010 Survey Lines*
- *Fuel Cache List*
- *Fuel Cache Unlabelled Locations*
- *NWT Protocol Review Form*
- *Combined Supporting Documents*
- *Coral Harbour Support Letter*

- *Kimmirut Support Letter*
- *Kinngait Support Letter*
- *Naujaat Support Letter*
- *Sanirajak Support Letter*

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 the GN's project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **July 11, 2024**.

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.

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/project/125939.

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact the undersigned at (867) 983-4622 or mbeattie@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,



Mia Beattie
Impact Assessment Officer
Nunavut Impact Review Board

Enclosures (4): Public Notice of Screening (English, and Inuktitut)
Comment Forms (English, and Inuktitut)

cc: Distribution List
Richard Dwyer, Nunavut Water Board
Dustin Fredlund, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
Carson Gillis, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
Jorgan Aitaok, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
Wynter Kuliktana, Kitikmeot Inuit Association
Tannis Bolt, Kitikmeot Inuit Association
Luis Manzo, Kivalliq Inuit Association
Ashley Aupaluktuq-Burton, Kivalliq Inuit Association
Brenda Pilakapsi, Kivalliq Inuit Association
Jared Ottenhof, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Chris Spencer, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Conor Goddard, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Joel Fortier, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Assol Kubeisinova, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Justin Buller, Government of Nunavut, Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs
Dianne Lapierre, Government of Nunavut, Department of Economic Development & Transportation
Jonas Azonaha, Government of Nunavut, Department of Economic Development & Transportation
Natalie D'Souza, Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment
Brad Pirie, Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment
Drikus Gissin, Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment
Patrick Graillon, Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment
Tracey McCaie, Crown – Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
Lisa Pirie-Dominix, Canadian Wildlife Services
Marie-Claude Martel, Parks Canada
Jane Chisholm, Parks Canada