

NPC 150573: Qikiqtait Marine Protected Area by Ministerial Order

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**Proposal Status: Conformity Determination Issued**

[Overview Documents](#)

[Project Overview](#)

Type of application: New

Proponent name:

Lauren Candlish

Proponent company:

Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)

Project Description:

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), along with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) are proposing a short-term marine protection measure in the Qikiqtait Study Area as a first step towards establishing long-term protection. The protection measure being proposed is a MPA by Ministerial Order (or “Order”) under the Oceans Act, s35.1(2), which would freeze the footprint of ongoing activities in the Qikiqtait Study Area for a period of up to five years. While the Order is in place, the Government of Canada will work collaboratively with Inuit and northern partners to consider long term protection priorities, including supporting an Inuit-led Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA). Under the Order, any activity that has occurred in the Qikiqtait Study Area over the 12 months prior to designation, or that is authorized to occur, would be allowed to continue and new activities would be prohibited, with some exceptions. Activities that would be permitted in the Qikiqtait MPA by Ministerial Order include: hunting and trapping, fishing, harvesting of marine plants, marine navigation, activities carried out by the department of National Defense and Canadian Coast Guard, tourism, recreational and educational activities, travel over sea ice (motorized and non-motorized methods of travel), Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit and community-based research activities, scientific research and filming. The Order would not apply with respect to the rights of Inuit as provided for in either the Nunavut Agreement or the Nunavik Agreement. This proposal was developed in collaboration with Inuit and northern partners and aligns with the conservation priorities of the Government of Canada and QIA, as outlined in their 2022 Prospectus, which focuses on a regional approach to conservation in the Qikiqtani Region. This proposal for a Ministerial Order MPA in Qikiqtait requires the negotiation of an Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement (IIBA) within the Nunavut Settlement Area. An IIBA between the Government of Canada and QIA is currently being negotiated and will be completed prior to establishment in 2025. The Qikiqtait Study Area is located within the Belcher Islands Ecologically and Biologically Significant Area (DFO, 2011) in southeast Hudson Bay. The community of Sanikiluaq, which is adjacent to the proposed MPA, has long recognized the importance of this area, and has advocated for Inuit stewardship and Inuit-led governance for many years (<https://qikiqtait.ca/vision/>). The Qikiqtait Study Area was also identified in the Qikiqtani Inuit Association’s (QIA) 2022 Prospectus on regional conservation as contributing to a network of protected areas planned across the Qikiqtani Region. Ecologically significant features of the area include; unique recurring polynyas and upwellings, nutrient-rich waters from nearby river plumes and estuaries, a productive benthic invertebrate community, and the presence of importance species such as Common Eider, Arctic Char, and a wide range of marine mammals. In 2023/24, the Qikiqtait and Sarvarjuaq Working Group identified a preliminary list of activities occurring in the Qikiqtait Study Area, including annual sealift operations,

icebreaking activities, marine research vessel activity, subsistence and traditional wildlife harvesting, recreational activities, and tourism. Additional activities were informed through community consultations and stakeholder engagement, including the harvesting of Eider Duck down, harvesting of marine plants, as well as media and filming activities. There is currently no oil and gas development in the area, nor mining operations. Partner input, community consultations, and industry and stakeholder engagement informed the list of ongoing activities in this area. In-person consultations with the community of Sanikiluaq regarding the proposed Qikiqtait MPA took place in November 2023 and in April 2024, facilitated by two important groups; the Sanikiluaq Qikiqtait Steering Committee (SQSC) formed by community members in 2018 to advance protection of the proposed Qikiqtait MPA, and the Qikiqtait and Sarvarjuaq Working Group, established in September 2021 to advance conservation measures in the Qikiqtait and Sarvarjuaq study areas. The Working Group includes members from QIA, the Government of Nunavut, and the Government of Canada (represented by DFO, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and Transport Canada). These two rounds of consultations consisted of daytime meetings between the Hamlet Council, Hunters and Trappers Association, the SQSC and the Working Group, along with an open public meeting taking place in the evening. Discussions focused on developing conservation objectives for the proposed MPA, determining the ongoing activities in the area, inclusion of Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit in future management and monitoring and community concerns and priorities regarding emerging commercial fisheries around Sanikiluaq. In September 2024, the Working Group sought community input on a “What We Heard” report summarizing the feedback provided by Sanikiluaq community members during these consultation processes. In October 2024, letters in support of the proposed regulation were received from the Sanikiluaq Hamlet Council, the Hunters and Trappers Association and the Arctic Eider Society. In addition a letter of support has been received from the Government of Nunavut. Stakeholder groups engaged in this process included, but were not limited to, the Nunavut Water Board, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., Inuit Circumpolar Council, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS), commercial fishing industry, shipping industry, tourism and cruise ship industries, oil and gas and mining industries, tour operators, fiber optic industry, and academia. In July 2024, letters were distributed to industry and other stakeholders requesting information about their ongoing activities within the proposed boundaries of Qikiqtait. A second set of letters were distributed in October 2024 seeking input on the regulatory intent for in the proposed Qikiqtait MPA. DFO is submitting this proposal with the intent of providing the NPC with an opportunity to assess the proposal and of meeting the Government of Canada’s obligations under the Nunavut Agreement.

#### [Project Schedule](#)

Start Date:

2025-07-01

End Date:

2030-06-30

#### [Project Map](#)

List of project geometries:

Id

Geometry

Location Name

14096

polygon

Qikiqtaik\_NRCAN\_SEB

NPC Planning regions:

**No Approved Plan**

[Project Land Use and Authorizations](#)

Project Land Use:

Other

Licensing Agencies:

Government of Canada - Fisheries and Oceans Canada

[Material Use](#)

Equipment:

Type

Quantity

Type

Use

No data found

Fuel Use:

Type

Container

Capacity

Use

No data found

Hazardous Material and Chemical Use:

Type

Container

Capacity

Use

No data found

Water Consumption:

Daily Amount (m<sup>3</sup>)

Retrieval Method

Retrieval Location

0

[Waste and Impacts](#)

Environmental Impacts:

N/A

Waste Management:

Waste Type

Quantity Generated

Treatment Method

Disposal Method

No data found