



NIRB File No.: 24VN053
NPC File No.: 150573

January 6, 2025

Jesslene Jawanda
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
3B-630 Queen Elizabeth Way
Iqaluit NU X0A 0H0

Sent via email: jesslene.jawanda@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Re: Notice of Screening for Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s “Qikiqtait Marine Protected Area by Ministerial Order” Project Proposal

Dear Jesslene Jawanda:

On November 15, 2024, the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral to screen Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s (DFO) “Qikiqtait Marine Protected Area by Ministerial Order” initiative from the Nunavut Planning Commission (project proposal), which noted that the project proposal was also outside the area of an applicable regional land use plan. On December 12, 2024, the NIRB received the complete application and commenced screening the project proposal under file number **24VN053** - please reference this file number in all future related correspondence.¹

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Scope:

The proposed Qikiqtait Marine Protected Area (Qikiqtait MPA) is a marine area established under a Ministerial Order and is located within the Belcher Islands Ecologically and Biologically Significant Area² in southeast Hudson Bay, within the Nunavut Settlement Area. The proposed marine area is approximately 180,000 square kilometres, surrounding the Belcher Islands, on which the community of Sanikiluaq is located (see map below).

¹ 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, subject to paragraph 182(f), section 86 of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*, S.C. 2013, c.14, s. 2 (*NuPPAA*), the Board determines the scope of the project.

² DFO. 2011. [Identification of Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas \(EBSAs\) in the Canadian Arctic](#). Sci. Advis. Rep.:2011/055. Available from DFO’s submission, [Project Description, on the NIRB’s Public Registry](#) (Doc ID No. 352370).

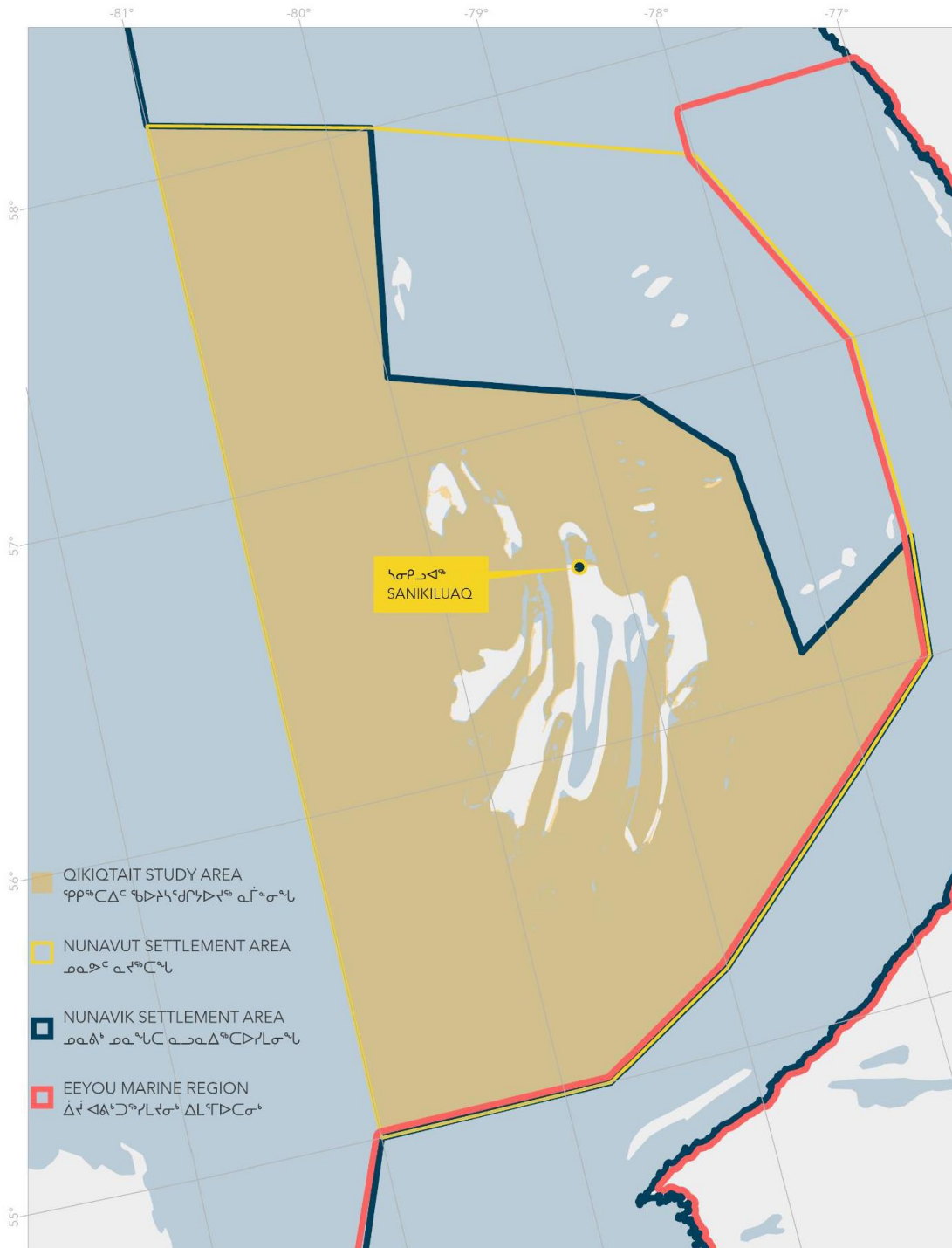


Figure 1 map of the proposed Qikiqtaaluk Marine Protected Area

The stated objective of the project proposal is to limit the use of the Qikiqtaaluk MPA for the next 5 years to allow for the development of long-term protection measures for the marine environment, reflecting Inuit leadership and applicable agreements.

The Order would generally prohibit carrying out any works or undertaking activities in the Qikiqtaaluk MPA for up to 5 years, starting July 2025, with some exceptions including:

- Inuit activities provided for under any Agreement or Act;
- lawful activities that have occurred or were authorized to occur in the 12 months before the order comes into force, or as identified in the classes of allowed activities in the Minister's Order;³
- Research activities consistent with the conservation objectives of the Qikiqtaut MPA;
- Activities carried out for purposes of public safety, national defence, national security, law enforcement or in emergency situations.

Inclusion or Exclusion of Scoping List

The marine environment would include the seabed, the subsoil and water column, but does not include islands, freshwater bodies, or areas of joint land use.

The proposed project would not make Fisheries and Oceans Canada a sole regulator of activities in the Qikiqtaut MPA but would prescribe general limitations on allowable uses of the area and exceptions (as set out in the exception list provided above) which would be implemented by other regulatory agencies responsible for regulating specific activities in the area, including but not limited to, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, Transport Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Nunavut Research Institute, Government of Nunavut and other regulators.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

All documents received can be accessed from the NIRB's Public Registry www.nirb.ca/project/126015 and include:

- *Nunavut Planning Commission's Screening Referral and Application for Conformity*
- *NIRB's Online Application Form*
- *Project Description* (English and Inuktitut)
- *Letters of Support*
- *Letters to Industry and Stakeholders*
- *Community Consultation Presentation* (2023 and 2024)
- *Consultation Report* (also referred to as the *What We Heard Report*, English and Inuktitut)
- *Regulatory Intent* (English and Inuktitut)
- *Socio-Economic Report*
- *Community Consultation and Engagement Summary*
- *Hydrocarbon Assessment*

The NIRB will copy you on all 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.

³ Per paragraph 35.1(2)(a) of the *Oceans Act*, the Minister's Order includes a proposed list of classes of *ongoing activities* in DFO's submission, [Project Description, on the NIRB's online public registry](#) (Doc ID No. 352370).

The NIRB is copying parties and municipalities potentially affected by Fisheries and Oceans Canada's project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **January 27, 2025**.

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 ecosystemic 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 including if a Review is required or if there are any additional factors that should be considered as part of that process.

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 Public Registry at www.nirb.ca/project/126015.

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact the undersigned at 1-866-233-3033 (toll-free) or lcai@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,



Leila Cai
Impact Assessment Officer
Nunavut Impact Review Board

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

cc:

Distribution List

Lauren Candlish, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
José Audet-Lecouffe, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Amy Amos, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Thomas Hoggarth, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Carson Gillis, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
Dustin Fredlund, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
Kathy Padluq, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
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
Steven Lonsdale, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Jason Akearok, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
Denis Ndeloh, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
Justin Buller, Government of Nunavut
Dianne Lapierre, Government of Nunavut
Sean Joseph, Government of Nunavut
Jonas Azonaha, Government of Nunavut
Natalie D'Souza, Government of Nunavut
Drikus Gissing, Government of Nunavut
Bradley Pirie, Government of Nunavut
Michele Leblanc-Havard, Government of Nunavut
Moshia Cote, Nunavut Research Institute
Tracey McCaie, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
Margaret Friesen, Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency
Eva Walker, Environment and Climate Change Canada
Prairies and Territories Office, Transport Canada
Richard Dwyer, Nunavut Water Board
Johnny Appaqaq, Municipality of Sanikiluaq
Robert Hedley, Hamlet of Sanikiluaq
Sanikiluaq Hunters & Trappers Association
Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Management Board
Mark Basterfield, Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board
Adamine Delisle Alaku, Makivvik Corporation
Andy Moorhouse, Makivvik Corporation