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Building *Nunavut* Together  
*Nunavut* liuqatigiingniq  
Bâtir le *Nunavut* ensemble

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Government of Nunavut  
Nunavut Kavamat  
Gouvernement du Nunavut

February 23, 2016

Solomon Amuno, PhD  
Technical Advisor II  
Nunavut Impact Review Board  
P.O Box 1360  
Cambridge Bay, NU X0B 0C0

*Sent VIA Email: [info@nirb.ca](mailto:info@nirb.ca)*

**RE: Notice of Screening for University of Toronto's "Lake Ice in the Canadian High Arctic" project proposal**

Dear Mr. Amuno,

The Government of Nunavut (GN) would like to thank the NIRB for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the Notice of Screening for University of Toronto's "Lake Ice in the Canadian High Arctic" project proposal.

On behalf of the GN-Department of Environment, comments pertaining to Caribou and Muskoxen specific to the project location are provided in the attached Appendix.

The GN has appreciated this opportunity to provide feedback in the assessment process for this project. Should you have any questions regarding this submission, please contact me at 867-975-7830 or by email at [asimonfalvy@gov.nu.ca](mailto:asimonfalvy@gov.nu.ca)

Qujannamiik,

[Original Signed By]

Agnes Simonfalvy  
Avatiliriniq Coordinator

## **APPENDIX**

The Polar Bear Pass National Wildlife Area and adjacent areas have been recognized as a uniquely productive High Arctic ecosystem supporting high densities of Peary caribou and muskoxen.

Peary caribou were listed as Endangered under the Species at Risk Act (SARA) in 2011 and a national Recovery Strategy is currently being drafted. Under Section 32 (1) of SARA, “No person shall kill, harm, harass, capture or take an individual of a wildlife species that is listed as an extirpated species, an endangered species or a threatened species.”

Caribou and muskoxen are sensitive to disturbance, including over-flights, ground activities, and noise which can affect their access to habitat, feeding cycles, reproduction and ultimately their survival. Caribou are particularly sensitive to disturbance during their calving and post-calving periods (late May to late June) whereas muskoxen are most sensitive to over-flight disturbance during their calving (late March into May, depending on the year and population) and early-rut (August) periods. Low-level flights are of significant concern, with the degree of disturbance to caribou and muskoxen decreasing with increased flight elevation.

Since the project is anticipated during the muskox calving season, it is important to minimize disturbance to muskox groups. Small calves are particularly vulnerable to being injured or left behind when herds stampede. Personnel and aircraft should not approach muskoxen, taking a different route or returning later if necessary. A recommended minimum flight elevation of 300 m should be observed when flying to minimize disturbance to wildlife.