



**NIRB File No.: 19YN035**  
NPC File No.: 149174

July 23, 2019

Ryan Bergin  
Queen's University  
116 Barrie Street  
Kingston, ON K7L 3N6

Sent via email: [ryan.bergin@queensu.ca](mailto:ryan.bergin@queensu.ca)

**Re: Notice of Screening for Queen's University's "A survey of mercury levels within edible plants, fungi and soil in Iqaluit and surrounding areas" Project Proposal**

Dear Ryan Bergin:

On July 2, 2019 the NIRB received a referral to screen Queen's University's "A survey of mercury levels within edible plants, fungi and soil in Iqaluit and surrounding areas" project proposal from the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC or Commission), which noted that the project proposal is outside the area of an applicable regional land use plan. 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 **19YN035**.

#### INFORMATION REQUEST

On July 2, 2019 the NIRB requested that the Proponent complete the online application form through the NIRB's public registry system and ensure, pursuant to s. 144(1) of the *NuPPAA*, that sufficient information is provided to determine the scope of the project activities being proposed and commence screening. On July 12, 2019 the NIRB received the required information and commenced the screening pursuant to Part 3 of the *NuPPAA*.

#### PROJECT OVERVIEW

***Project Scope:***

The proposed "A survey of mercury levels within edible plants, fungi and soil in Iqaluit and surrounding areas" project is located within the Qikiqtani (South Baffin) region, within the municipal boundaries of the city of Iqaluit. The Proponent intends to sample multiple plant species

and fungal species in different locations within Iqaluit in order to determine their potential to accumulate mercury. The program is proposed to take place from July to August 2019.

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

- Undertake additional sampling of plants and fungi species within Iqaluit and surrounding locations in order to determine their potential to accumulate mercury:
  - Use of shovel or trowel to sample fungi species (i.e. puffballs) that were found to accumulate high levels of mercury from the 2018 sample collection,
  - Collect corresponding fungal mycorrhiza and soil samples in order to determine if the mercury is accumulated from the soil or the atmosphere.
- Conduct laboratory testing of collected plant, fungi and soil samples for total mercury concentrations.

### ***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 accessed from the NIRB's online public registry at [www.nirb.ca/project/125475](http://www.nirb.ca/project/125475).

The documents received include:

- *NPC Screening Referral*
- *NPC Application*
- *NIRB's Online Application Forms*
- *Non-technical Project Proposal summary in English, Inuktitut, and French*
- *Government of Nunavut 2018 Wildlife Research Permit*
- *Final Report for 2018 Sampling Program*
- *Maps noting Sampling Locations*

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 Queen's University's project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **August 2, 2019**.

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](mailto: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/125475](http://www.nirb.ca/project/125475).

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

Sincerely,



Solomon Amuno, PhD  
Technical Advisor II  
Nunavut Impact Review Board

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

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

cc: Distribution List  
Stephen Williamson Bathory, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Jared Ottenhof, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Joel Fortier, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Amy Robinson, Government of Nunavut – Department of Environment  
Drikus Gissing, Government of Nunavut – Department of Environment  
Mosha Cote, Nunavut Research Institute

## **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. Queen's University (the Proponent) shall maintain a copy of the Project Terms and Conditions at the site of operation at all times.
2. The Proponent shall operate in accordance with all commitments stated in correspondence provided to the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC File No.: 149174) and the NIRB (Online Application Form, July 12, 2019).
3. The Proponent shall operate the site in accordance with all applicable Acts, Regulations and Guidelines.

#### **Wildlife - General**

4. The Proponent shall ensure that there is no damage to wildlife habitat in conducting this operation.
5. The Proponent shall not harass wildlife. This includes persistently circling, chasing, pursuing or in any other way harass wildlife, or disturbing large groups of animals.
6. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.
7. 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**

8. The Proponent shall not disturb or destroy the nests or eggs of any birds. If active nests of any birds are discovered or located (i.e., with eggs or young), the Proponent shall avoid these areas until nesting is complete and the young have naturally left the vicinity of the nest by establishing a protection buffer zone<sup>1</sup> appropriate for the species and the surrounding habitat.
9. The Proponent shall minimize activities during periods when birds are particularly sensitive to disturbance such as migration, nesting and moulting.
10. The Proponent shall avoid the seaward site of seabird colonies and areas used by flocks of migrating waterfowl by three (3) kilometres.

#### **Restoration of Disturbed Areas**

11. The Proponent shall ensure that the land use area is kept clean and tidy at all times.
12. 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.

#### **Other**

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<sup>1</sup> Recommended setback distances to define buffer zones have been established by Environment and Climate Change Canada for different bird groups nesting in tundra habitat and can be found at [www.ec.gc.ca/paom-itmb](http://www.ec.gc.ca/paom-itmb).

13. The Proponent should engage with local residents regarding planned activities in the area and should solicit available Inuit Qaujimaningit and information regarding current recreational and traditional usage of the project area which may inform project activities. Posting of translated public notices and direct engagement with potentially interested groups and individuals prior to undertaking project activities is strongly encouraged.
14. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
15. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.