



NIRB File No.: 19YN036
NPC File No.: 149182

August 7, 2019

Ryan VanEngen
University of Waterloo
Department of Biology
200 University Ave. W
Waterloo, ON N1H 2X4

Sent via email: rvanengen@uwaterloo.ca

Re: Notice of Screening for University of Waterloo’s “Coastal Environmental Baseline Program: Baseline Mercury Levels in Frobisher Bay Fish and Invertebrates” Project Proposal

Dear Ryan VanEngen:

On July 2, 2019 the NIRB received a referral to screen University of Waterloo’s (U Waterloo) “Coastal Environmental Baseline Program: Baseline Mercury Levels in Frobisher Bay Fish and Invertebrates” 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 **19YN036**.

INFORMATION REQUEST

On July 3, 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 18, 2019 the NIRB released formal correspondence requesting that the Proponent provide the Board with the information necessary in order to carry out the screening of the project proposal. On July 19, 2019 the NIRB received the required information and commenced the screening pursuant to Part 3 of the *NuPPAA*.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Scope:

The proposed “Coastal Environmental Baseline Program: Baseline Mercury Levels in Frobisher Bay Fish and Invertebrates” project is located within the Qikiqtani (South Baffin) region, within the municipal boundaries of the city of Iqaluit. The Proponent intends to understand fisheries baseline conditions in the local coastal ecosystem of Frobisher Bay by measuring mercury concentrations in different fish species and benthic invertebrates. The program is proposed to take place seasonally during the open water season from September 2019 to 2021.

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

- Use of a boat to access different research sampling locations around Frobisher Bay;
- Collection of fish (such as Arctic cod, Arctic char, and other forage fish species), bivalves (e.g., clams) and benthic invertebrates (e.g., starfish, decapod crustaceans, barnacles) samples in near-shore and intertidal zones of Frobisher Bay;
 - Conduct measurements of total mercury and methyl mercury in samples collected;
- Storage and use of gasoline (sourced from the community) for refueling boat during research activities;
- Disposal of non-combustible wastes in the municipal landfill;
- Use of facilities and accommodations in Iqaluit; and
- Build capacity of local community members to characterize ecosystem and oceanographic processes in Frobisher Bay.

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/125460.

The documents received include:

- *NPC Screening Referral*
- *NIRB’s Online Application Forms*
- *Non-technical Project Proposal summary in English, Inuktitut and French*
- *University of Waterloo-Project Description*
- *Maps noting sampling sites*

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 University of Waterloo's project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **August 19, 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, 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/125460.

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact the undersigned at (867) 983-4603 or 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
Drikus Gissing, Government of Nunavut – Department of Environment
Mosha Cote, Nunavut Research Institute
Mark D'Aguiar, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

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. University of Waterloo (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.: 149182) and the NIRB (Online Application Form, July 19, 2019).
3. The Proponent shall operate the site in accordance with all applicable Acts, Regulations and Guidelines.

Fuel and Chemical Storage

4. The Proponent shall store all fuel and chemicals in such a manner that they are inaccessible to wildlife.
5. The Proponent shall locate all fuel and other hazardous materials a minimum of thirty-one (31) metres away from the high water mark of any water body and in such a manner as to prevent their release into the environment unless otherwise authorized by the Nunavut Water Board.
6. The Proponent shall ensure that re-fueling of all equipment occurs a minimum of thirty-one (31) metres away from the high water mark of any water body unless otherwise authorized by the Nunavut Water Board.
7. The Proponent shall ensure that appropriate spill response equipment and clean-up materials (e.g., shovels, pumps, barrels, drip pans, and absorbents) are readily available during any transfer of fuel or hazardous substances.

Wildlife - General

8. The Proponent shall ensure that there is no damage to wildlife habitat in conducting this operation.
9. The Proponent shall not harass wildlife. This includes persistently circling, chasing, hovering over pursuing or in any other way harass wildlife, or disturbing large groups of animals.
10. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.
11. 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

12. 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 zone¹ appropriate for the species and the surrounding habitat.

13. The Proponent shall minimize activities during periods when birds are particularly sensitive to disturbance such as migration, nesting and moulting.
14. The Proponent shall avoid the seaward site of seabird colonies and areas used by flocks of migrating waterfowl by three (3) kilometres.

Marine-Based Activities

15. The Proponent shall not deposit, nor permit the deposit of any fuel, chemicals, wastes (including waste water) into any marine waters.
16. The Proponent shall manage all wastes (including domestic, garbage and debris) on board the vessel prior to final disposal at approved facilities.
17. The Proponent shall not attempt to intersect or interfere with the movements of marine mammals.
18. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 100 metres if a polar bear is encountered on land or ice while conducting activities from the vessel; all interaction with polar bears should be avoided if possible.

Other

19. 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.
20. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
21. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.

¹ 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.