



NIRB File No.: 21YN021

NPC File No.: 149466

May 13, 2021

Stephanie Coulombe
Polar Knowledge Canada
1 Uvajuq Road
Cambridge Bay, Nunavut X0B 0C0

Sent via email: stephanie.coulombe@polar.gc.ca

Re: Notice of Screening for Polar Knowledge Canada's "Coastal Hazard Assessment in Kugluktuk and Grise Fiord (Ajuittuq), Nunavut" Project Proposal

Dear Stephanie Coulombe:

On February 12, 2021 the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral to screen Polar Knowledge Canada's "Coastal hazard assessment in Kugluktuk and Grise Fiord (Ajuittuq), Nunavut" project proposal from the Nunavut Planning Commission (Commission), with an accompanying positive conformity determination with the North Baffin 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 **21YN021** - please reference this file number in all future related correspondence.

INFORMATION REQUEST

Following a preliminary completeness check of the proposal as submitted on April 19, 2021 by the Proponent, the NIRB determined that the proposal did not contain the necessary information for the NIRB to carry out its screening and on May 3, 2021 requested that the Proponent provide the Board with the additional information in order to carry out the screening of the project proposal. On May 3, 2021 the NIRB received the required information and commenced the screening pursuant to Part 3 of the *NuPPAA*.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Scope:

All documents received and pertaining to this project proposal can be accessed from the NIRB's online public registry at www.nirb.ca/project/125605.

Project:	Coastal Hazard Assessment in Kugluktuk and Grise Fiord (Aujuittuq), Nunavut
Region:	Kitikmeot and Qikiqtani (North Baffin) Regions
Location:	Kugluktuk and Grise Fiord
Summary of Project Description:	The Proponent intends to study and measure coastal erosion in Kugluktuk and Grise Fiord, the community-based research project has two (2) objectives; to gain new knowledge of the coastal erosion processes and permafrost degradation and to provide learning and training opportunities for youth.
Project Proposed Timeline:	June 29, 2021 to August 29, 2021 with a two (2) year phase between 2021-2023

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

- Use of five (5) All Terrain Vehicles to travel to study sites;
- Use of a boat to deploy a mooring, buoys and three (3) bottom-mounted sensors to measure wave and water levels in the intertidal zone during low-tide, sensors will be retrieved before freeze-up;
- Use of a small-fixed drone to conduct high-precision mapping and aerial surveys of the coastal zones;
- Use of three (3) automatic time-lapsed cameras to monitor and quantify coastal erosion in relations to storms;
- Use of a portable earth auger to collect permafrost samples;
- Use of gasoline 20 liters to refill earth auger; and;
- Hiring of locals to support the project.

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 can be accessed from the NIRB's online public registry at www.nirb.ca/project/125605 and include:

- *Commission Conformity Determination*
- *Commission Project Application*
- *Commission Questionnaire*
- *Non-technical Summary in English, Inuktitut, and Inuinnaqtun*
- *NIRB Application in English, French, Inuktitut, and Inuinnaqtun*
- *Project application documents for Kugluktuk and Grise Fiord*

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 Polar Knowledge Canada project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **May 25, 2021**.

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/125605.

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact the undersigned at (867) 983-4616 or femingak@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,



Francis Emingak
Junior Technical Advisor
Nunavut Impact Review Board

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

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

cc: Distribution List
Geoff Clark, Kitikmeot Inuit Association
Wynter Kuliktana, Kitikmeot Inuit Association
Stephen Williamson-Bathory, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Jared Ottenhof, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Joel Fortier, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Natalie O'Grady, Government of Nunavut
Amy Robinson, Government of Nunavut
Mosha Cote, Nunavut Research Institute
Tracey McCaie, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
Lisa Pirie-Dominix, Canadian Wildlife Service
N.John Olyslager, Environment and Climate Change Canada
Daniel Coombs, 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. Polar Knowledge Canada (the Proponent) shall maintain a copy of the Project Terms and Conditions at the site of operation at all times and make it accessible to enforcement officers upon request.
2. The Proponent shall operate in accordance with all commitments stated in correspondence provided to the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC File No.: 149466) and the NIRB (Online Application Form, April 19, 2021. This information should be accessible to enforcement officers upon request.
3. The Proponent shall operate the site in accordance with all applicable Acts, Regulations and Guidelines.
4. The Proponent shall ensure that it meets the standards and/or limits as set out in the authorizing agencies' permits or licences as required for this project.
5. The Proponent shall ensure that all personnel, staff and contractors are adequately trained prior to commencement of all project activities, and shall be made aware of all operational plans, management plans, guidelines and Proponent commitments relating to the project.

Water courses/Water bodies (including fresh and marine waters)

6. The Proponent shall ensure that no disturbance of the stream bed, lakebed or the banks of any definable watercourse be permitted, except where deemed necessary for maintaining project-specific operational commitments or approved by a responsible authority in cases of spill management.
7. The Proponent shall not deposit, nor permit the deposit of any fuel, chemicals, wastes (including wastewater) or sediment into any water body. The Proponent should have in place an Emergency Spill Response Plan that is approved by the appropriate authorizing agency(ies).

Waste Management

8. The Proponent shall manage all hazardous and non-hazardous waste including food, domestic wastes, debris and petroleum-based chemicals (e.g., greases, gasoline, glycol-based antifreeze) in such a manner to avoid release into the environment and access to wildlife at all times until disposed of appropriately or at an approved facility.

Fuel and Chemical Storage

9. The Proponent shall locate all fuel and other hazardous materials a minimum distance away from the high-water mark of any water body and environmentally sensitive areas as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies. The materials shall be stored in such a manner as to prevent their release into the environment.

10. The Proponent shall ensure that re-fuelling of all equipment occurs a minimum distance away from the high-water mark of any water body as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies.
11. All fuel and chemical storage containers must be clearly marked with the Proponent's name for ease of identification.
12. The Proponent shall have a Spill Contingency Plan in place at all fuel storage or transfer locations and shall ensure that appropriate spill response equipment and clean-up materials (e.g., shovels, pumps, barrels, drip pans, and absorbents) are readily available.
13. The Proponent shall follow the authorizing agencies' direction for management and removal of hazardous materials and wastes (e.g., contaminated soils, sediment and waste oil).
14. The Proponent shall ensure that wildlife deterrent systems are utilized at the time of a spill incident in order to avoid wildlife (terrestrial or marine) and migratory birds from being contaminated.
15. The Proponent shall ensure that all spills of fuel or other deleterious materials of 100 litres or more must be reported immediately to the 24-hour Spill Line at (867) 920-8130.

Air Quality

16. The Proponent shall eliminate unnecessary idling to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible.

Wildlife – General

17. The Proponent shall not substantially alter or damage or destroy any wildlife habitat in conducting this operation unless otherwise authorized by the appropriate authorizing agencies.
18. The Proponent shall not chase, weary, harass or molest wildlife. This includes persistently circling, chasing, hovering over, pursuing or in any other way harass wildlife, or disturbing large groups of animals.
19. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.
20. The Proponent shall ensure that all wildlife have the right-of-way on any roads or trails. Vehicles are required to slow down or stop and wait to permit the free and unrestricted movement of wildlife across roads or trails at any location.

Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance

21. The Proponent shall carry out all phases of the project in a manner that protects migratory birds and avoids harming, killing or disturbing migratory birds or destroying, disturbing or taking their nests or eggs. In this regard, the Proponent shall take into account Environment and Climate Change Canada's *Avoidance Guidelines*. The Proponent's actions in applying the *Avoidance Guidelines* shall be in compliance with the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* and with the *Species at Risk Act*.
22. 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.

23. The Proponent shall avoid the seaward site of seabird colonies and areas used by flocks of migrating waterfowl, a minimum distance away on the recommendation of the appropriate authorizing agencies.
24. The Proponent shall not pursue seabirds or waterbirds swimming on the water surface and shall avoid concentrations of these birds if encountered on the water.
25. The Proponent shall not locate any operation or undertake activities that could block or cause any diversion to migration of caribou or muskoxen.
26. The Proponent shall immediately cease activities likely to interfere with the migration or calving of caribou or muskoxen until such time as the caribou or muskox have passed.

Road and Ground Disturbance

27. The Proponent shall not move any equipment or vehicles unless the ground surface is in a state capable of fully supporting the equipment or vehicles without rutting or gouging. Overland travel of equipment or vehicles must be suspended if rutting occurs.
28. The Proponent shall use existing trails where possible during project activities on the land.
29. The Proponent shall ensure that the land use area is kept clean and tidy at all times.
30. The Proponent shall avoid disturbance on slopes prone to natural erosion, and alternative locations shall be utilized.
31. The Proponent shall remove all garbage, fuel and equipment at the end of each field season and/or upon completion of work and/or upon abandonment.
32. The Proponent shall ensure that all disturbed areas are restored to a stable or pre-disturbed state using Best Available Technology Economically Achievable (BATEA) upon completion of work and/or abandonment.

Camps

33. The Proponent shall ensure that all camps are located durable surfaces, such as gravel or sand that is consolidated and can withstand repeated, heavy use. Measures shall be put in place to prevent erosion, trail formation and damage to the ground.

Marine-Based Activities

34. The Proponent shall ensure that noise be kept to a minimum and shall refrain from making sharp or loud noises, blowing horns or whistles and shall maintain constant engine noise levels.
35. The Proponent shall not visit cliffs used by nesting and breeding birds during the late afternoon or early evening hours during the months of August and September.

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.

36. The Proponent shall anchor large vessels, such as cruise ships at least 500 metres away from seabird and sea duck breeding colonies except Ivory gull breeding sites which requires a setback distance of 2,000 metres. Further, the Proponent shall ensure small launch vessels (e.g., zodiacs, kayaks) maintain a distance of 100 metres from the seabird colonies.
37. The Proponent shall not attempt to intersect or interfere with the movements of marine mammals. This includes ensuring that there are no wake zones within 250 metres and a minimum of 100 metre no go zone around marine mammals. Strategic positioning of vessels ahead of the path being traveled by mobile mammals and waiting for the mammals to pass is also prohibited.
38. When marine mammals appear to be trapped or disturbed by vessel movements, the Proponent shall implement appropriate measures to mitigate disturbance, including stoppage of movement until wildlife have moved away from the immediate area.
39. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 100 metres if a Polar Bear is encountered on land or ice while conducting activities from a zodiac or other small craft; all interaction with Polar Bears should be avoided if possible.
40. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 500 metres of a walrus haul out while conducting activities from a zodiac or other small craft.
41. The Proponent shall suspend all project activities should any dead fish or wildlife (both marine and terrestrial), or any injured wildlife be observed during any works or activities in and around the marine waters. Activities may only be resumed on the recommendation of the authorizing agencies.
42. The Proponent shall report all incidents, injuries or sightings of marine mammals to the appropriate authorizing agencies.
43. The Proponent shall implement measures designed to minimize disturbance to seabed sediments and benthic communities and marine wildlife when carrying out project activities within the marine environment.

Other

44. 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.
45. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
46. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.