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August 13, 2021

Lootie Toomasie  
Chairperson  
Nunavut Water Board  
Gjoa Haven, NU  
X0B 1J0

Dear Lootie Toomasie and the Board of Directors for the Nunavut Water Board,

I am Keenan Nooks Lindell, an Inuk resident and home owner in Arviat, Nunavut and I am writing to you today to express my deep concern over the location of the proposed new tank farm in Arviat as well as the lack of information given to the community members about this upcoming major project.

From what I have heard and from looking at where they are drilling currently, the proposed location is about 50 metres to our homes in the neighbourhood and as close to the shore line of Arviat. I have many concerns about this. This area is very important to me, it is a beautiful part of our community and to imagine it as a tank farm and possible power plant breaks my heart and kills my spirit. I struggle from anxiety and depression and being able to look out at the land and walk this area is one of the things that helps me the most. My family members and I along with so many others have grown up playing in this area as children, going for walks, playing with pets, looking for birds eggs, skating in the winter on the ponds in the area and more.

This area currently sits as a piece of nature within our community, it contributes beauty and access to the shore and land. During the winter it is a trail for community members to travel through by skidoo and in the summer it is full of life with plants, flowers, birds laying their eggs, and other small animals. It provides a view of serene landscape and water from the graveyard for those who may need comfort at the loss of a loved as they return to town. Imagine that space overtaken by industrial tanks and a power plant. It does not produce the same effect on our community. It would also destroy the view of the shore line as people come and go from the dock on their boats, affecting the image of the community that locals and visitors alike will see as they go by. This affects how we see ourselves as a community and how others will perceive us as well.

Here in Arviat, it is common for polar bears to come into town from the direction of the point. As it is, we have a clear line of vision to see and react to bears as they make their way towards our homes and community at large. If this tank farm and power plant were to be built in this area it would obstruct our view and would increase the likelihood of encountering a bear at close range before we realize they are there, endangering our lives and especially those of our children. This is no small concern as bears are seen every year in town and coming from the direction of the proposed location of this development.

I am also very concerned that if there was to be a fuel spill, so close to the ocean, it would have a devastating and long lasting impact to our water, shore line and therefore our lives and ability to feed our families. Many families set up fish nets along the shore, hunt whales in this area or collect mussels on the shore, and this inlet is full every spring with people fishing for cod. The shore of Hudson Bay along Arviat feeds our community and is an essential part of our lives and culture. To put this at risk, puts our harvesting rights as Inuit under article 5 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement to hunt and provide for our families at risk as well.

Recently there was leak at the tank farm in Baker Lake and that incident highlights that the potential risk is always there and therefore the importance of ensuring the location of any dangerous goods is well situated away from all environmentally fragile areas such as our bountiful shoreline here in Arviat. Even with the newest technology we have to recognize that over the many years of use, things can happen and ensuring the least amount of damage when spills like this may happen cannot be ignored, in fact it should be the most important thing we do is protect our water from that kind of contamination.

This proposed area is the traditional home of the Katsuaq family from Arviat and they put tents up and lived there every summer. We have already lost many of these types of sites around Arviat when our parents and grandparents were never consulted and land were just bulldozed without any consideration of their historical attachment to the people of Arviat. I do not want to see that happen again and this taken into consideration that we protect this part of Arviat history.

In Arviat, there is an area, further from the shore that is already used for industrial type buildings and activity. This location already holds the current tank farm and there is much unused land between there and the dump that are not as close to homes or areas used for activities that would be destroyed by the view and space taken by the tanks and power plant. It seems unwise and inappropriate to consider an area of town not yet marked by industrial impact when there are already areas that are designated for industrial usage and would have the least impact on the feel and use of our community spaces and land/water access. We are home owners in this area, we have invested our time and money into living here and we do not support this drastic and impactful change near our homes and in our neighbourhood.

Matna,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keenan Nooks Lindell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Keenan Nooks Lindell