



NIRB File No.: 25YN024

NIRB Public Registry Link: [www.nirb.ca/project/126169](http://www.nirb.ca/project/126169)

NPC File No.: 150692

May 13, 2025

Marianne Marcoux  
501 University Crescent  
Winnipeg Manitoba  
R3T 2N6

Sent via email: [marianne.marcoux@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:marianne.marcoux@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

**Re: Notice of Screening for Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s “Biopsy, tagging, acoustics, and drone work on walrus and beluga” project proposal**

Dear Marianne Marcoux:

The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral to screen Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s “Biopsy, tagging, acoustics, and drone work on walrus and beluga” project proposal from:

- The Nunavut Planning Commission on April 7, 2025, noting Keewatin Land Use Plan, and
- The NIRB received a complete application on April 14, 2025, and assigned it file number **25YN024** - please reference this file number in all future related correspondence.

The NIRB has commenced screening the project proposal pursuant to the *Nunavut Agreement* and *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*<sup>1</sup> and by copy of this letter, **invites interested parties and municipalities potentially affected by the proposal to comment directly to the Nunavut Impact Review Board.**

#### SCOPE OF PROPOSED PROJECT

<b>Location</b>	Kivalliq and Qikiqtani Regions, including Coral Harbour, Igloolik, Kinngait, Nauyasat, and Sanirajak.
<b>Objective</b>	The Proponent intends to conduct research about walrus and beluga whales to determine how they may be affected by the increased shipping in the areas of

<sup>1</sup> 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 Qikiqtani and Kivalliq regions through studying critical habitat and shipping corridors, listening and watching for behaviour changes (foraging, resting, vocalizing) and using this information to potentially develop mitigation measures such as buffer zones around important terrestrial and marine habitat.
<b>Timeline</b>	July to October 2025

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

- Daily trips by boat to the survey sites in and around Coral Harbour, Igloolik, Kinngait, Naujaat, and Sanirajak to survey and place equipment while avoiding protected areas or national parks,
- Collect biopsy samples of walrus and beluga to study the genetics of the species,
- Equip some walruses and belugas with satellite tags to determine the location and depth of where the species roam,
- Use drones and remote cameras to conduct aerial surveys and to monitor walrus haul outs and gather behavioral data on beluga whales,
- Place hydrophones to monitor marine mammal presence,
- Local support from the local Hunters and Trappers Associations/Organizations to hire boats, captains and field research assistants;
- Use of community accommodations and fuel; and
- Analyze the data at a laboratory facility.

### ***Inclusion or Exclusion of Scoping List***

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

Documents received and describing the proposal can be accessed from the NIRB's online public registry at [www.nirb.ca/project/126169](http://www.nirb.ca/project/126169) and include:

- *NPC Conformity Determination*
- *NPC Application*
- *Community Support Letters*
- *Igloolik Hunter and Trappers Association Support Letter*
- *Aiviq Hunters and Trappers Organization Letter of Support*
- *Cape Dorset Hunters and Trappers Organization Contract signed walrus fieldwork*
- *NIRB Application*

The NIRB may request additional information at any time during the process.

By copy of this letter, the NIRB is inviting interested parties and municipalities potentially affected by the project proposal to comment directly to the NIRB by **June 3, 2025**.

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.
  - Any matter of importance to the Party related to the project proposal including if a Review is required any additional factors that should be considered as part of that process.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

**Please send 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/126169](http://www.nirb.ca/project/126169). Questions should be directed to the undersigned at (867) 983-4619 or [rqammaniq@nirb.ca](mailto:rqammaniq@nirb.ca).**

Sincerely,



Robby Qammaniq  
Impact Assessment Officer  
Nunavut Impact Review Board

Enclosures (4): Public Notice of Screening (English and Inuktitut)  
Comment Forms (English, and Inuktitut)

cc: Distribution List  
Dustin Fredlund, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated  
Carson Gillis, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated  
Jorgan Aitaok, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated  
Luis Manzo, Kivalliq Inuit Association  
Ashley Aupaluktuq-Burton, Kivalliq Inuit Association  
Brenda Pilakapsi, Kivalliq Inuit Association  
Jared Ottenhof, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Chris Spencer, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Conor Goddard, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Joel Fortier, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Assol Kubeisinova, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Justin Buller, Government of Nunavut  
Dianne Lapierre, Government of Nunavut  
Mosha Cote, Nunavut Research Institute  
Lisa Pirie, Canadian Wildlife Service  
Environment and Climate Change Canada

Jose Audet-Lecouffe, Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
Hamlet of Coral Harbour  
Coral Harbour Hunters and Trappers Organization  
Hamlet of Kinngait  
Kinngait Hunters and Trappers Organization  
Hamlet of Igloolik  
Igloolik Hunters and Trappers Organization  
Hamlet of Naujaat  
Naujaat Hunters and Trappers Organization  
Hamlet of Sanirajak  
Sanirajak Hunters and Trappers Organization