



NIRB File No.: 25YN045

NIRB Public Registry Link: www.nirb.ca/project/126187

NPC File No.: 150678

June 6, 2025

Darcy McNicholl
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
501 University Crescent
Winnipeg MB, R3T 2N6

Sent via email: darcy.mcnicholl@dfo.gc.ca

Re: Notice of Screening for Fisheries and Oceans Canada's (DFO) "Arctic Coast - Nunavut Community-based Monitoring" project proposal

Dear Darcy McNicholl:

The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral to screen Fisheries and Oceans Canada's (DFO) "Arctic Coast - Nunavut Community-based Monitoring" project proposal from:

- The Nunavut Planning Commission on May 6, 2025, noting that it conforms to the Keewatin Regional Land Use Plan (KRLUP) and
- The NIRB received a complete application on May 30, 2025, and assigned it file number **25YN045** - 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*¹ 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

Location	Kivalliq, Qikiqtani region, Chesterfield Inlet, Rankin Inlet, Kinngait, Iqaluit, Qikiqtarjuaq
Objective	The Proponent intends to conduct a community-monitoring program, led by DFO that is co-developed with local hunters and trappers boards to gather baseline data on coastal fishes and their habitats, requesting support from the Aqigiq Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO), Kangiqliniq HTO, Aiviq HTO, Nattivak Hunters and Trappers Association (HTA), and Amaruq HTA to

¹ 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)

	continue community-based monitoring work and collect environmental DNA to develop a protocol with the communities to monitor the expansion of salmon.
Timeline	July 2025 to March 2026, Summer and winter periods

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

- The community-based field programs would run at different times:
 - Chesterfield Inlet from July 20 – September 1, 2025, once per week for five weeks;
 - Kinngait from August 26 – October 13, 2025, once per week for up to five weeks;
 - Kinngait from January 25, 2026 – March 15, 2026;
 - Iqaluit would not have a community-based structure but would be working with the DFO-Iqaluit office from August 19 – August 24, 2025;
 - Qikiqtarjuaq from September 6 – September 28, 2025;
- Use of up to five boats during the project;
- Use of two snowmobiles during the winter months in Kinngait;
- Use of gillnets to collect fish, such as salmon, Arctic char, whitefish, however if monitors are able to collect other fishes such as saffron cod, Greenland cod, and sculpins, any fish collected would be measured, photographed and samples sent to DFO biologist at the Freshwater Institute in Winnipeg;
- Collection of 30 fish per species;
- Use of approximately 100 liters of gasoline to be used for the boats and snowmobiles sourced from the communities;
- Any waste generated would be properly disposed of in approved facilities; and
- Use of a cabin near Cormack Bay for overnighting if the opportunity permits.

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/126187 and include:

- *NPC Conformity Determination & Application*
- *NIRB Email Proponent Re Online Public Registry*
- *2023 Chesterfield Summer Arctic Coast*
- *2023 Arctic Coast Summer Rankin*
- *2024 Arctic Salmon Fall Update*
- *2025 Support Letter DFO*
- *Arctic Salmon Project Support Letter*
- *Arctic Coast Dates*
- *2025 Aqigiq HTO Letter of Support*
- *NIRB Application & Revised 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 16, 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.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please send 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/126187. Questions should be directed to the undersigned at 1-866-233-3033 or femingak@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,

Francis Emingak
Screening Officer
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
Dustin Fredlund, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.
Carson Gillis, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.
Jorgan Aitaok, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.
Luis Manzo, Kivalliq Inuit Association
Ashley Aupaluktuq- Burton, Kivalliq Inuit Association
Brenda Pilakapsi, Kivalliq Inuit Association
Jared Ottenhof, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Chris Spncer, 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
Sean Joseph, Government of Nunavut
Jonas Azonaha, Government of Nunavut
Natalie D'Souza, Government of Nunavut
Bradley Pirie, Government of Nunavut
Michele LeBlanc-Havard, Government of Nunavut
Drikus Gissing, Government of Nunavut
José Audet-Lecouffe, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Aqigiq Hunters and Trappers Organization
Aiviq Hunter and Trappers Association
Amaruq Hunters and Trappers Association
Nattivak Hunters and Trappers Association

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. Fisheries and Oceans 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.: 150578 and the NIRB (Online Application Form, May 30, 2025. 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 water extraction from any fish-bearing waterbody is done with appropriate care and caution. Small lakes or streams should not be used for water withdrawal unless approved by the appropriate authorizing agency.
7. 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.
8. 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

9. 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

10. 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.

11. 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.
12. All fuel and chemical storage containers must be clearly marked with the Proponent's name for ease of identification.
13. 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.
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.

Wildlife – General

16. 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.
17. 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.
18. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.

Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance

19. 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*.
20. 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 zone² appropriate for the species and the surrounding habitat.

² 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.

21. 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.
22. 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.

Caribou and Muskoxen Disturbance

23. The Proponent shall avoid interfering with any paths or crossings known to be frequented by caribou during periods of migration as identified by current land use plans in place and/or by Inuit Qaujimaningit.

Road and Ground Disturbance

24. 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.
25. The Proponent shall not move any equipment or vehicles without prior testing the thickness of the ice to ensure the lake, river or stream is in a state capable of fully supporting the equipment or vehicles.

Camps

26. 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

27. 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.
28. 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.
29. 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.
30. 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.
31. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 500 metres of a walrus haul out while conducting activities from a zodiac or other small craft.
32. 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.

33. The Proponent shall report all incidents, injuries or sightings of marine mammals to the appropriate authorizing agencies.
34. 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.

Heritage Sites

35. The Proponent shall ensure that archaeological and paleontological sites are not purposely or inadvertently disturbed by clients or staff as a result of project activities.
36. The Proponent shall ensure that all clients and staff are aware of the Proponent's responsibilities and requirements regarding archaeological or palaeontological sites that are encountered during land-based activities. This should include briefings explaining the prohibitions regarding removal of artifacts, and defacing or writing on rocks and infrastructure.
37. No activities shall be conducted in the vicinity (50 metres buffer zone) of any archaeological/historical sites. If archaeological sites or features are encountered, activities shall immediately be interrupted and moved away from this location. Each site encountered needs to be recorded and reported to the Government of Nunavut-Department of Culture and Heritage.

Other

38. 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.
39. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
40. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.