



**SCREENING DECISION REPORT
NIRB FILE No.: 26YN029**

NPC File No.: 151149

June 16, 2026

Following the Nunavut Impact Review Board’s (NIRB or Board) assessment of all materials provided, the NIRB is recommending that a review of Université Laval’s (ULaval) “Iqaluit Cod Derby Science Project” is not required pursuant to Article 12, Section 12.4.4(a) of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)* and s. 92(1)(a) of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act, S.C. 2013, c. 14, s. 2 (NuPPAA)*.

Subject to the Proponent’s compliance with the terms and conditions as set out in below, issued in accordance with s. 92(2)(a) of *NuPPAA*, the NIRB is of the view that the project proposal is not likely to cause significant public concerns, and it is unlikely to result in significant adverse environmental and social impacts. The NIRB therefore recommends that the responsible Minister accepts this Screening Decision Report.

OUTLINE OF SCREENING DECISION REPORT

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REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The primary objectives of the NIRB are set out in Article 12, Section 12.2.5 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and are confirmed by s. 23 of the *NuPPAA*. The purpose of screening is provided for under Article 12, Section 12.4.1 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and s. 88 of the *NuPPAA*.

As set out under Article 12, Section 12.4.4 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and s. 92(1) of the *NuPPAA*, upon conclusion of the screening process, the Board must provide its written report the Minister indicating one of three options:

- (a) a review of the project is not required;
- (b) a review of the project is required; or
- (c) the project should be modified or abandoned.

PROJECT OVERVIEW & THE NIRB ASSESSMENT PROCESS

On April 27, 2026, the NIRB received a referral to screen Université Laval’s “Iqaluit Cod Derby Science Project” proposal from the Nunavut Planning Commission (Commission), which noted that the project proposal is outside the area of an applicable land use plan. All documents received and pertaining to this project proposal can be accessed from the NIRB’s Public Registry by using any of the following search criteria or www.nirb.ca/project/126454.

- Project Name: Iqaluit Cod Derby Science Project
- NIRB File No.: 26YN029
- NIRB Application No.: 126454

Table 1: NIRB’s Assessment Process

| Date | Stage |
|----------------|--|
| April 27, 2026 | Receipt of project proposal from the Commission; and referral from the Commission |
| May 12, 2026 | Pursuant to s. 144(1) of the <i>NuPPAA</i> the NIRB requested the Proponent complete an online application to address information required for Screening |
| May 12, 2026 | Scoping pursuant to s. 86(1) of the <i>NuPPAA</i> |
| May 14, 2026 | Public engagement and comment request (which included draft terms and conditions) was issued in English with translations provided once available |
| June 4, 2026 | Receipt of public comments |
| June 16, 2026 | Issuance of Screening Decision Report |

1. Project Scope

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Location | Qikiqtani (South Baffin) region, within marine waters of Frobisher Bay near Iqaluit. |
| Objective | The Proponent intends to study the Frobisher Bay Arctic cod population, focusing on size structure, diet, and genetics to improve understanding of its ecology and health. |
| Timeline | May to July 2026 |

As required under s. 86(1) of the *NuPPAA*, the Board accepted the scope of the project as set out by ULaval in the proposal. The scope of the project proposal includes the following undertakings, works, or activities:

- Collection of up to 50 Arctic cod samples harvested by local community members during the Iqaluit Cod Derby; and
- Shipping frozen Arctic cod to Université Laval for laboratory analyses.

2. Inclusion or Exclusion to 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.

3. Public Comments and Concerns

As outlined in Table 1 above, notices regarding the NIRB’s screening of this project proposal were distributed to community organizations as well as to relevant federal and territorial government agencies, Inuit organizations and other parties with a request for interested parties to provide the Board with any comments or concerns 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.

On or before June 4, 2026, the NIRB received comments from the following interested parties:

Table 2: Comments Received

| Commenting Party | NIRB Doc ID No. |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Government of Nunavut (GN) | 361705 |
| Transport Canada (TC) | 361450 |
| Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) | 361639 |

a. Summary of Comments and Concerns Received

The following provides a summary of the comments and concerns received by the NIRB in relation to the “Iqaluit Cod Derby Science Project” proposal:

Government of Nunavut (GN)

- Has no comments to raise with the Board at this time.

Transport Canada (TC)

- Does not have any comments, as no project components fall within TC’s mandate.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)

- Acknowledges that the project has applied for a Licence to Fish for Scientific Purposes (LFSP) but has not applied for an Animal Use Protocol (AUP) for the project.
- Notes that a LFSP and AUP may be needed for the project. DFO recommends the project review the Guidelines for a Licence to Fish for Scientific Purposes Application and send the application to Arctic Region Permitting.

4. b. Comments and Concerns with respect to Inuit Qaujimaningit, Indigenous and Community Knowledge

No concerns or comments were received with respect to Inuit Qaujimaningit or Indigenous and Community knowledge in relation to the proposed project. However, Inuit Qaujimaningit and Indigenous and community knowledge is incorporated into the terms and conditions recommended below based on information collected from prior and similar projects, data collected and mapped by the Commission, and other available sources.

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT PROPOSAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 3 OF *NUPPAA*

In determining whether a review of the project is required, the Board considered whether the project proposal had potential to result in significant ecosystemic or socio-economic impacts. Table 3. The Board took particular care to consider Inuit Qaujimaningit, Indigenous and Community Knowledge in carrying out its assessment and determination of the significance of impacts.

Table 3: Summary of the Board’s Assessment of Factors s. 90 *NuPPAA*

| Factor | Comment |
|---|--|
| The size of the geographic area, including the size of wildlife habitats, likely to be affected by the impacts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The physical footprint of the proposed project components is within the municipal boundaries of the community of Iqaluit. ▪ The proposed project would take place within habitats of far-ranging wildlife species such as migratory and non-migratory birds, Arctic fox, Arctic hare and Species at Risk such as Polar Bears. |
| The ecosystemic sensitivity of that area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frobisher Bay supports Arctic marine ecosystems and provides habitat for Arctic cod and marine wildlife. ▪ The proposed project is not expected to result in disturbance to sensitive ecosystem features due to its limited scope and reliance on fish harvested through existing community activities. |
| The historical, cultural and archaeological significance of that area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No specific areas of historical, cultural and archaeological significance have been identified by the Proponent within the physical footprint of the proposed project. |

| Factor | Comment |
|--|--|
| The size of the human and the animal populations likely to be affected by the impacts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed project is unlikely to result in impacts to local human and animal populations. ▪ The project may provide positive benefits through increased understanding of Arctic cod populations in Frobisher Bay. |
| The nature, magnitude and complexity of the impacts; the probability of the impacts occurring; the frequency and duration of the impacts; and the reversibility or irreversibility of the impacts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A zone of influence of up to 5 km from the most potentially disruptive project activities was selected for the NIRB's assessment. ▪ Potential impacts are expected to be negligible due to the limited number of fish samples collected and the absence of new harvesting activities by the Proponent. ▪ With adherence to the relevant regulatory requirements and application of the mitigation measures recommended by the NIRB, no significant residual effects are expected to occur. |
| The cumulative impacts that could result from the impacts of the project combined with those of any other project that has been carried out, is being carried out or is likely to be carried out. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The NIRB has not identified any past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects at this time; however, the Board has recommended terms and conditions along with mitigation measures designed with consideration for the potential for cumulative effects in the Board Views section. |
| Any other factor that the Board considers relevant to the assessment of the significance of impacts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DFO noted that a Licence to Fish for Scientific Purposes and an Animal Use Protocol may be required and recommended that the Proponent obtain all applicable authorizations prior to undertaking the project. ▪ No other relevant factors were identified; however, see below for Regulatory Requirements mandating mitigation and/or reporting. |

Regulatory Requirements

The Proponent is also advised that the following legislation may apply to the Project:

Acts and Regulations

1. The *Species at Risk Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/s-15.3/>). Attached in **Appendix A** is a list of Species at Risk in Nunavut.
2. The *Wildlife Act (Nunavut)* and its corresponding regulations (<http://www.canlii.org/en/nu/laws/stat/snu-2003-c-26/latest/snu-2003-c-26.html>).

VIEWS OF THE BOARD

In considering the above factors, the Board has identified the following and respectfully provides its views regarding whether or not the proposed project has the potential to result in significant impacts. The NIRB has also proposed terms and conditions that would mitigate the potential adverse impacts identified.

Ecosystem, wildlife habitat and Inuit harvesting activities:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Valued Component | Fish and fish habitat, and aquatic environment. |
| Potential effects: | Project activities may result in minor, temporary disturbance to fish and no localized disturbance to fish habitat during research activities. |
| Nature of Impacts: | The impact on fish and fish habitat is considered to be low, as harvesting is conducted by experienced local harvesters during the normal fish harvesting season, effects on fish populations and aquatic environment are expected to be low in magnitude, short-term, and fully reversible. |
| Mitigating Factors: | Proponent intends fish harvesting by experienced local harvesters during the normal season. The number of fish samples collected is limited, and no habitat-disturbing activities are proposed. |
| Proposed Terms and Conditions: | Waste Management – 6 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Valued Component | Public and traditional land use activities |
| Potential effects: | Potential impacts are expected to be low in magnitude and localized due to the limited scale and duration of activities. Any interactions with land use activities are expected to be temporary and reversible. |
| Nature of Impacts: | Potential impacts are expected to be low in magnitude and localized due to the limited scale and duration of activities. Any interactions with land use activities are expected to be temporary and reversible. |
| Mitigating Factors: | The Proponent intends to minimize interference with land use activities by conducting short-duration, localized field activities and considering available Inuit knowledge and land use patterns, where practicable. |
| Proposed Terms and Conditions: | Other – 7 and 8 |

Significant public concern:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Valued Component | Public concern |
| Potential effects: | No significant public concern was expressed during the public commenting period for this file; however, the Board is recommending terms and conditions to ensure that to the extent possible hire local people and access local services where possible, and to ensure planned activities in the area utilizes available Inuit Qaujimaningit. |
| Nature of Impacts: | The potential for impacts is considered to be minimal as long as the Proponent follow the recommended terms and conditions. |
| Mitigating Factors: | Recommended terms and conditions |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Proposed Terms and Conditions: | Other – 7 through 9 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|

Technological innovations for which the effects are unknown:

- No specific issues have been identified associated with this project proposal.

Administrative Conditions:

To encourage compliance with applicable regulatory requirements and assist the Board and responsible authorities with compliance and effects monitoring for project activities, the following project-specific terms and conditions have been recommended: 1-5.

In considering the above factors and subject to the Proponent’s compliance with regulatory requirements and the terms and conditions necessary to mitigate against the potential adverse environmental and social effects, the Board is of the view that the proposed project is unlikely to cause significant public concern and its adverse ecosystemic and socioeconomic impacts are unlikely to be significant, or are highly predictable and can be adequately mitigated by known technologies.

RECOMMENDED PROJECT-SPECIFIC TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Board is recommending the following specific terms and conditions to apply in respect of the project:

General

1. Université Laval 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.: 1511490) and the NIRB (Online Application Form, May 12, 2026). 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.

Waste Management

6. 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.

Other

7. 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.
8. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
9. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.

OTHER NIRB CONCERNS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the project-specific terms and conditions, the Board is recommending the following:

Change in Project Scope

1. Responsible authorities or Proponent shall notify the Nunavut Planning Commission and/or Parks Canada as appropriate, and the NIRB of any changes in operating plans or conditions, including phase advancement, associated with this project prior to any such change.

Copy of licences, etc. to the Board and Commission

2. The NIRB respectfully requests that responsible authorities submit a copy of each licence, permit or other authorization issued for the Project to the NIRB to assist in enabling possible project monitoring that may be required. Please forward a copy of the licences, permits and/or other authorizations to the NIRB directly at info@nirb.ca or upload a copy to the NIRB's online registry at www.nirb.ca.

Use of Inuit Qaujimaningit

3. The Proponent is encouraged to work with local communities and knowledge holders to inform project design, to carry out the project, and to confirm or validate the perspectives represented in publications, and reports as part of the project. Care should be taken to ensure that Inuit Qaujimaningit and local knowledge collected for the project is used with permission and is accurately represented.

Bear and Carnivore Safety

4. The Proponent should review the Government of Nunavut's booklet on Bear Safety, which can be downloaded from this link: http://gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/bear_safety_-_reducing_bear-people_conflicts_in_nunavut.pdf. Further information on bear/carnivore detection and deterrent techniques can be found in the "*Safety in Grizzly and Black Bear Country*"

pamphlet, which can be downloaded from this link: https://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/sites/enr/files/resources/safety_in_grizzly_and_black_bear_country_english.pdf.

5. There are polar bear and grizzly bear safety resources available from the Bear Smart Society with videos on polar bear safety available in English, French and Inuktitut at <http://www.bearsmart.com/play/safety-in-polar-bear-country/>. Information can also be obtained from Parks Canada's website on bear safety at the following link: <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/nu/quttinirpaaq/visit/visit6/d.aspx> or in reviewing the "Safety in Polar Bear Country" pamphlet, which can be downloaded from the following link: http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/nu/quttinirpaaq/visit/visit6/~/_media/pn-np/nu/auyuittuq/pdf/shared/PolarBearSafety_English.ashx.
6. Any problem wildlife or any interaction with carnivores should be reported immediately to the local Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment Conservation Office (Conservation Officer of Iqaluit, phone: (867) 975-7788).

Species at Risk

7. The Proponent review Environment and Climate Change Canada's "Environment Assessment Best Practice Guide for Wildlife at Risk in Canada", available at the following link: http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/virtual_sara/files/policies/EA%20Best%20Practices%202004.pdf. The guide provides information to the Proponent on what is required when Wildlife at Risk, including *Species at Risk*, are encountered or affected by the project.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing constitutes the Board's screening decision with respect to the Université Laval's "Iqaluit Cod Derby Science Project". The NIRB remains available for consultation with the Minister regarding this report as necessary.

Dated June 16, 2026 at Iqaluit, NU.



Albert Ehloak, Chairperson

Attachments: Appendix A: Species at Risk in Nunavut

APPENDIX A: SPECIES AT RISK IN NUNAVUT

Due to the requirements of Section 79(2) of the *Species at Risk Act*, S.C. 2002, c. 29 (*SARA*), and the potential for project-specific adverse effects on listed wildlife species and its critical habitat, measures should be taken as appropriate to avoid or lessen those effects, and the effects need to be monitored. Project effects could include species disturbance, attraction to operations and destruction of habitat. This section applies to all species listed on Schedule 1 of *SARA*, as listed in the table below, or have been assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), which may be encountered in the project area. This list may not include all species identified as at risk by the Territorial Government. The following points provide clarification on the applicability of the species outlined in the table.

- Schedule 1 is the official legal list of Species at Risk for *SARA*. *SARA* applies to all species on Schedule 1. The term “listed” species refers to species on Schedule 1.
- Schedule 2 and 3 of *SARA* identify species that were designated at risk by the COSEWIC prior to October 1999 and must be reassessed using revised criteria before they can be considered for addition to Schedule 1.
- Some species identified at risk by COSEWIC are “pending” addition to Schedule 1 of *SARA*. These species are under consideration for addition to Schedule 1, subject to further consultation or assessment.

If species at risk are encountered or affected, the primary mitigation measure should be avoidance. The Proponent should avoid contact with or disturbance to each species, its habitat and/or its residence. All direct, indirect, and cumulative effects should be considered. Refer to species status reports and other information on the Species at Risk Registry at <http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca> for information on specific species.

Monitoring should be undertaken by the Proponent to determine the effectiveness of mitigation and/or identify where further mitigation is required. As a minimum, this monitoring should include recording the locations and dates of any observations of Species at Risk, behaviour or actions taken by the animals when project activities were encountered, and any actions taken by the proponent to avoid contact or disturbance to the species, its habitat, and/or its residence. This information should be submitted to the appropriate regulators and organizations with management responsibility for that species, as requested.

For species primarily managed by the Territorial Government, the Territorial Government should be consulted to identify other appropriate mitigation and/or monitoring measures to minimize effects to these species from the project.

Mitigation and monitoring measures must be undertaken in a way that is consistent with applicable recovery strategies and action/management plans.

Schedules of *SARA* are amended on a regular basis, so it is important to check the *SARA* registry (www.sararegistry.gc.ca) to get the current status of a species.

Updated: September 2024

| Terrestrial Species at Risk ¹ | COSEWIC Designation | Schedule of SARA | Government Organization with Primary Management Responsibility ² |
|--|---------------------|------------------|---|
| Buff-breasted Sandpiper | Special Concern | Schedule 1 | Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) |
| Common Nighthawk | Threatened | Schedule 1 | ECCC |
| Eskimo Curlew | Endangered | Schedule 1 | ECCC |
| Harlequin Duck | Special Concern | Schedule 1 | ECCC |
| Harris's Sparrow | Special Concern | Schedule 1 | ECCC |
| Horned Grebe | Special Concern | Schedule 1 | ECCC |
| Ivory Gull | Endangered | Schedule 1 | ECCC |
| Olive-sided Flycatcher | Threatened | Schedule 1 | ECCC |
| Peregrine Falcon | Special Concern | Schedule 1 | ECCC |
| Red Knot Islandica Subspecies | Special Concern | Schedule 1 | ECCC |
| Red-necked Phalarope | Special Concern | Schedule 1 | ECCC |
| Ross's Gull | Threatened | Schedule 1 | ECCC |
| Rusty Blackbird | Special Concern | Schedule 1 | ECCC |
| Short-eared Owl | Special Concern | Schedule 1 | ECCC |
| Porsild's Bryum | Threatened | Schedule 1 | Government of Nunavut (GN) |
| Transverse Lady Beetle | Special Concern | No Schedule | GN |
| Caribou (Dolphin and Union Population) | Endangered | Schedule 1 | GN |
| Caribou (Barren-ground Population) | Threatened | No Schedule | GN |
| Caribou (Torngat Mountains Population) | Endangered | No Schedule | GN |
| Grizzly Bear (Western Population) | Special Concern | Schedule 1 | ECCC |
| Peary Caribou | Endangered | Schedule 1 | GN |
| Polar Bear | Special Concern | Schedule 1 | ECCC |
| Wolverine | Special Concern | Schedule 1 | GN |
| Atlantic Walrus (High Arctic Population) | Special Concern | No Schedule | Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) |
| Atlantic Walrus (Central/Low Arctic Population) | Special Concern | No Schedule | DFO |
| Beluga Whale (Cumberland Sound Population) | Threatened | Schedule 1 | DFO |
| Beluga Whale (Eastern Hudson Bay Population) | Endangered | No Schedule | DFO |
| Beluga Whale (Eastern High Arctic-Baffin Bay Population) | Special Concern | No Schedule | DFO |
| Beluga Whale (Western Hudson Bay Population) | Special Concern | No Schedule | DFO |
| Atlantic Cod (Arctic Lakes Population) | Special Concern | No Schedule | DFO |
| Fourhorn Sculpin (Freshwater Form) | Data Deficient | Schedule 3 | DFO |
| Lumpfish | Threatened | No Schedule | DFO |
| Thorny Skate | Special Concern | No Schedule | DFO |

¹ The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has responsibility for aquatic species.

² Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) has a national role to play in the conservation and recovery of Species at Risk in Canada, as well as responsibility for management of birds described in the Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA). Day-to-day management of terrestrial species not covered in the MBCA is the responsibility of the Territorial Government. Populations that exist in National Parks are also managed under the authority of the Parks Canada Agency.