ᓄᓇᕗᑦ ᐅᒪᔨᓕᕆᔨᒃᑯᑦ ᑲᑎᒪᔨᖅᑐᑦ
Nunavunmi Anngutighatigut Aulapkaijitkut Katimajiat
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

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Tammaqtailinahuarniriit anngutighat atuqhugit Inuit qaujimajatuqangillu ilihimaniillu ilitquhiannin
Conserving wildlife through the application of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and scientific knowledge

October 15, 2024

C/o Joseph Judas, Chairperson
The Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board
4504 49th Ave,
Yellowknife, NT,
X1A 1A7

RE: 2024 Sahtì Ekwǫ̀ Management Proceedings

Dear Members of the Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board,

The Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) appreciates the opportunity to participate in the review process for the joint management proposal concerning the Sahtì (Bluenose-East) Ekwǫ̀ barren-ground caribou herd. We recognize the vital importance of this shared resource to both of our regions and the significant challenges involved in balancing sustainable management with the needs of our communities.

In March 2024, the NWMB reviewed a recommendation from the Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association (Kugluktuk HTO) to increase the Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) for the Bluenose-East herd from 170 to 450 caribou and to remove the Non-Quota Limitation on female caribou harvests. During our deliberations, we considered both scientific research and community observations regarding the herd's population trends. According to the most recent calving ground and fall composition surveys, the Sahtì ekwǫ̀ population grew from 23,202 animals in 2021 to 39,525 in 2024, with high pregnancy rates and favourable calf-to-cow ratios observed from 2019 to 2023. These promising signs of recovery were supported by local knowledge, where community members, including those in Kugluktuk, reported increased sightings of cows with calves and of healthy, robust caribou returning to traditional migration routes. The Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM) acknowledged this evidence of recovery, revising the herd's population trend to "likely increasing." The NWMB also considered modelling data from the Government of the Northwest Territories, which suggested that harvesting approximately 600 male caribou annually—representing roughly 1.5% of the population—would not negatively impact the herd, provided the current growth trend continues.

Based on this evidence, the NWMB determined that increasing the Kugluktuk TAH to 450 caribou, along with the removal of the Non-Quota Limitation, which had restricted the harvest to a 1:1 female-to-male ratio and limited the number of caribou cows that

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☎ (867) 975-7300
(888) 421-9832

Titiqqap Turaarvia 1379
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0
☎ (867) 975-7300
(888) 421-9832

Box 1379
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0
☎ (867) 975-7300
(888) 421-9832

could be harvested, would not raise immediate conservation concerns. This conclusion, combined with support from co-management partners, guided the NWMB's decision to approve the Kugluktuk HTO's request.

We acknowledge the Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board's responsibility to make decisions that reflect the needs of the herd and the communities that rely on it. As the proposed TAH of 395 bulls per year for Northwest Territories harvesters is considered, we trust the Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board will weigh the impacts carefully, keeping in mind the shared nature of this herd. Caribou remain vital to both Northwest Territories and Nunavut harvesters, and we respect the care and attention that will guide this decision.

The NWMB looks forward to continued collaboration with the Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board, the Tłı̨chǫ Government, and the Government of the Northwest Territories, as well as other stakeholders, to ensure the long-term health and viability of the Sahtì Ekwǫ̀ herd.

Sincerely,

Daniel Shewchuk
Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

- Jody Pellissey, Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board
- Amanda Dumond, Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association