



February 21, 2020

Hon. Shane Thompson, Minister
Environment and Natural Resources
Government of the Northwest Territories
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Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9
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Via Email
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Grand Chief George Mackenzie
Tłıchq Government
Box 412
Behchokò, NT X1A 1Y0
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Re: 2020 Dìga Joint Management Proposal

Dear Minister Thompson & Grand Chief Mackenzie:

The Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) developed and on February 6, 2019, submitted a predator management proposal to the Department of Environment & Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Tłıchq Government (TG). The WRRB requested that predator management begin by May 2019 in order to promote recovery of the *Kqk'èetì ekwò* (Bathurst caribou) and *Sahtì ekwò* (Bluenose-East caribou) herds as well as ensure the potential for a future harvest. Governments responded to the Board on March 7, 2019 with a commitment to develop a predator management proposal but declined to act on the WRRB proposal. The Board followed up on December 18, 2019 requesting a *Dìga* (wolf) management proposal from GNWT and TG.

On January 31, 2020, the WRRB received a joint management proposal, entitled "*Joint Proposal on Management Actions for Wolves (dìga) on the Bathurst and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Caribou (ɛekwò) Herd Winter Ranges: 2020 – 2025*", which outlines proposed management actions for *dìga* in Wek'èezhì. While the Board appreciates receiving this joint management proposal, the WRRB wishes to bring the difficulties created by the timing of this government action to your attention. The delay in preparing this wildlife management proposal and the timing of its submission effectively means that no relief by way of predator control can be provided to the *kqk'èetì* and *sahtì ekwò* herds in this harvest season. The WRRB is bound by law to conduct proceedings which meet the requirements of fairness. The time required to ensure reasonable public opportunities to participate in the proceeding addressing this joint government proposal means that spring will be well advanced before approvals result. This is a most unfortunate outcome for *ɛekwò* herds which are in the words of ENR staff "*in a precarious position*".

Additionally, after an initial review of the joint management proposal by staff and technical advisors, the Board has significant concerns about the lack of detail and technical content in the proposal. The

most appropriate action would be for the WRRB to deem the proposal incomplete and return it for revisions. However, the Board feels that the urgency of the situation, with respect to the kòk'èti and sahtì ekwò herds, requires the Board to call a proceeding and address the deficiencies in the joint management proposal in accordance with a work plan.

As such, the WRRB has determined that a Level 2 review is appropriate, as per its Rule for Management Proposals (Motion #692-13-02-2020). The Board considers the establishment of a Level 2 proceeding to be sufficient to serve the public interest. Taking into consideration the Board and staff's capacity and commitments, the earliest possible date to open the proceeding and the public registry is March 2, 2020. Attached is the work plan, which identifies the scope and anticipated timelines of the Board's proceeding.

The public comment period will remain open until April 17, 2020. Please note that, on or before March 27, 2020, the Board will reconsider its work plan and make a determination as to whether a public hearing will be required to ensure sufficient consultation. To support this decision-making, the WRRB requests that GNWT and TG provide their consultation logs from their Tłchq community meetings as well as with other Indigenous governments, as identified in the joint management proposal, by February 28, 2020. Additionally, the Board requests that a summary of the preparation and training and other steps undertaken to implement TG's current Community-based Wolf Training Program be provided by February 28, 2020. Please note that these documents will be added to the public registry: <https://www.wrrb.ca/public-information/public-registry>.

The WRRB also notes that while the Board is undertaking the process of reviewing and providing recommendations on the Diga Joint Management Proposal, the WRRB does not support the Wildlife Research Permit Application, submitted by Robert Mulders, GNWT Carnivore/Furbearer Biologist, entitled "*Collaring Wolves on the Central Barrens*". The Board encourages Mr. Mulders to submit a revised Wildlife Research Permit Application following the completion of the WRRB's 2020 Wolf Management Proceeding.

If there are any questions, please contact our office at (867) 873-5740 or jpellissey@wrrb.ca.

Sincerely,



Joseph Judas
Chair

Attachment

Cc Dr. Erin Kelly, Deputy Minister, ENR-GNWT
Brett Elkin, A/Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations, ENR-GNWT
Rob Gau, A/Director, Wildlife Division, ENR, GNWT
Bruno Croft, Superintendent, North Slave Region, ENR-GNWT
Laura Duncan, Tłchq Executive Officer, TG
Tammy Steinwand-Deschambeault, Director, Culture and Lands Protection, TG
Michael Birlea, Manager, Culture and Lands Protection, TG