



January 23, 2007

Honourable Michael McLeod
Minister of Environment and Natural Resources
P.O. Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9

Dear Minister:

ENR Proposal on Bathurst Caribou Herd Management Actions

On December 15, 2006, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) submitted a proposal to the Wek'eezhii Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) outlining proposed management actions to reduce harvesting and collect accurate harvest information on the Bathurst Caribou Herd. We note that while the Department sought direction from the Board "as soon as possible", no specific date for the Board's response was suggested in association with that proposal.

On December 20, 2006, the WRRB met to review the ENR proposal. In view of the significance and implications of some of the management actions proposed, and the fact that the WRRB, as a new organization, has not yet heard from other parties affected by the ENR proposal, the Board decided to conduct a public hearing before making any decisions on the proposal.

On January 15, 2007, the WRRB received your letter, dated January 8, 2007, and was surprised at the indication that the Department had decided, on an interim basis, to set the available Big Game hunting tags for Barren Ground caribou in Unit "R" at a total of 750 tags for 2007. This January 8th letter to the Board was accompanied by your correspondence to the Barrenground Caribou Outfitters Association in which you advised Mr. Peterson that you had decided to set the 2007 total for tags at 750. The WRRB has been given no explanation for the late delivery of this correspondence.

The WRRB received yet another letter from you, dated January 18, 2007, in which the Department explains the method by which the ENR has decided to allocate the 750 tags among the outfitters. That letter sets a January 26th, 2007 date for a response by the WRRB.

When you consider this sequence of events, I trust that you will understand that the WRRB is feeling both displeasure and discomfort at the actions which have been taken by ENR without considering either the Board or its role under the Tlicho Agreement (TCA). In accordance with the TCA, the WRRB is to serve as the main instrument of wildlife management within the Wek'eezhii management area.

Section 12.5.1 (TCA) clearly indicates that any party that intends to take any action for the management of wildlife in Wek'eezhii shall submit its proposals to the WRRB for review.

By meeting with the outfitters in early January and reaching a decision on the Big Game tags available for 2007 without any involvement of the WRRB, you and your officials have failed to respect the Board's role regarding wildlife management in Wek'eezhii and the process which the Board intends to follow in responding to ENR's December 15th proposal.

The WRRB understands that ENR views the situation with the Bathurst Caribou Herd as urgent and we concur that actions need to be taken to help the herd recover. Nonetheless, we do not believe that disregard of the Board's role and process represents the best way forward to identify appropriate management actions for the herd and encourage interested parties to work together to preserve this herd.

In closing, the Board notes that neither of the letters of January 8th or January 18th provides any explanation to the Board of the basis upon which ENR decided to set the Big Game tags in Unit "R" for 2007 at 750.

As a result, the WRRB is not able to comment on this proposed "interim step" at this time or on ENR's proposed method for the allocation of the tags. The issue of the appropriate number and allocation of Big Game tags for Outfitters will be discussed during the Board's upcoming public hearing on ENR's December 15th proposal. We will report to you on the results of our process in due course.

Sincerely,



Alfonz Nitsiza
Interim Chairperson

C Honourable Joseph L. Handley
Premier

Honourable Brendan Bell
Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment

Grand Chief George MacKenzie
Tlicho Government

Mr. Jim Peterson, President
Barren Ground Caribou Outfitters Association