



To: Members of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

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February 29, 2016

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RE: Caribou Habitat and Land Use Planning

I am writing to you to make sure that our territory's decision-makers understand the perspective of Kivalliq hunters when it comes to caribou habitat. As the Nunavut Planning Commission moves forward with developing a new land use plan, caribou habitat has become a very hot topic in our territory.

The Hunters and Trappers Organizations in the Kivalliq region were very happy to learn that the Government of Nunavut supports the protection of caribou calving grounds. For years, HTOs have been fighting to protect caribou calving grounds from industrial development. Caribou are very sensitive when giving birth. We were traditionally taught to avoid disturbing cows and calves during the calving season, to ensure that the caribou herds will thrive. Both elders and wildlife biologists have recommended to HTOs that we protect caribou calving grounds.

All of our HTOs worked together to try to stop Anconia Resources from exploring in the very heart of the Qamanirjuaq herd's calving grounds. The Kivalliq Wildlife Board has also discussed the need for protection of caribou calving grounds at all of our recent Annual General Meetings, and passed numerous resolutions opposing mining and exploration in calving grounds. Many Dene and Metis communities in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories also hunt from hers that give birth in Nunavut. These communities also support protecting caribou calving grounds. Learning that the Government of Nunavut supports our attempt to protect the calving grounds was very welcomed news to our HTOs.

However, I would like you to be aware that there are other areas of caribou habitat that Inuit hunters would like to protect. The KWB has also asked for caribou post-calving grounds to be protected from mining and exploration. Caribou are also very sensitive in the weeks immediately after giving birth, and the KWB also supports protecting the post calving grounds based on the recommendation of western biologists and Inuit elders.

Some of our HTOs, would also like to see caribou water crossings protected. Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit teaches us that caribou are very sensitive at water crossings, to human activity or changes to the land. There are many traditional rules for how we should act around water crossings, to avoid changing caribou migrations. The water crossings were some of the most important areas for caribou hunting and inland camping, and some water crossings are still very important for hunting and camping today.

I hope that you will continue to consider the wishes of Kivalliq HTOs as the GN develops its plans for caribou habitat protection.

Barney Aggark
Chair, Aqigiq Hunters and Trappers Organization

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