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FEB 02 2017



Ms. Elizabeth Copland
Chairperson
Nunavut Impact Review Board
29 Mitik Street, PO Box 1360
CAMBRIDGE BAY NU X0B 0C0

Dear Ms. Copland:

I am pleased to announce that Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada is undertaking a Strategic Environmental Assessment in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait, which will be a key consideration in the 5-year review of the Government of Canada decision to designate Canadian Arctic waters as off limits to future oil and gas licences, announced in the United States-Canada Joint Arctic Leaders' Statement on December 20, 2016.

In previous correspondence, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated have asked that the Government consent to the Nunavut Impact Review Board's participation in the Strategic Environmental Assessment. I want to thank you for taking the time to work with our department's staff to explore options for the Board's role in this important initiative.

As per Section 12.2.4 of the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*, I formally request the Nunavut Impact Review Board draft the Strategic Environmental Assessment and coordinate the process. Departmental staff will assist the Board in reviewing the scope and developing terms of reference, as well as at other critical stages, such as the review of the initiative's findings and recommendations. We request that the Board complete this work by March 2019.

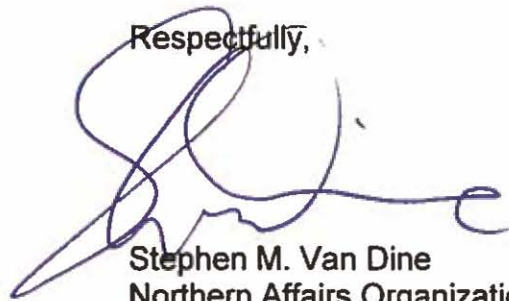
We understand that the Strategic Environmental Assessment will rely on both traditional knowledge and scientific information to consider potential interactions of oil and gas activities with the natural and social environment in the region. We have heard, and we agree, that Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit is an essential component of strategic considerations related to long-term sustainable resource development and conservation planning in the region. We request that the Nunavut Impact Review Board integrate Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit work conducted by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, as well as provide opportunities for all stakeholders, with a strong emphasis on meaningful community engagement, to ask questions,

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share concerns, and present observations and research to inform recommendations, as the Board would in its project-specific environmental assessments.

For further information, please contact Michel Chenier, Acting Director, Environment and Renewable Resources, at Michel.Chenier@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca or (819) 934-9181.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stephen M. Van Dine', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephen M. Van Dine
Northern Affairs Organization

Encl.

c.c.: Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok
Ms. Aluki Kotierk
Mr. Andrew Nakashuk
Mr. Jason Akearok
Mr. Thomas Kabloona
The Honourable Monica Eil-Kanayuk
The Honourable Johnny Mike