

Hamlet of Kugaaruk

P.O. Box 205, Kugaaruk, Nunavut X0B 1K0 Phone # 867-769-6281 Fax # 867-769-6069

October 23, 2024

Joseph Inagayuk Quqqiaq MLA for Netsilik 6th Legislative Assembly of Nunavut P.O. Box 166 Taloyoak, NU XOB 1B0

Phone: (867) 561-6243

Dear MLA Quqqiaq,

We are writing to express concern on behalf of the community of Kugaaruk regarding the weather observer function at the airport in Kugaaruk (and across Nunavut). Reliable weather observation is critical for the coordination of emergency medical evacuations (Medevac) at our local airport, where timely weather reports can mean the difference between life and death for patients needing urgent care.

Currently, the weather observer function is contracted to a third party under the oversight of Nav Canada, a change from when the Hamlet previously held this contract. Unfortunately, we are facing significant challenges in obtaining timely and accurate weather reports, which are essential for facilitating nighttime Medevac landings and take-offs. The ongoing lapses in communication due to underfunding are compromising our ability to maintain essential healthcare services in the community.

It has come to our attention that the current funding for the weather observer function may not adequately cover the costs associated with after-hours call-outs, making it difficult to retain qualified staff. Additionally, many potential weather observers in our community are opting for positions at local Co-ops or Northern Stores, where they can earn higher hourly wages and enjoy better working hours without the demands of overnight call-outs. This trend raises significant concerns about the safety and well-being of our community.



Hamlet of Kugaaruk

P.O. Box 205, Kugaaruk, Nunavut X0B 1K0 Phone # 867-769-6281 Fax # 867-769-6069

During the time when the Hamlet managed the contract for weather observation, we faced similar funding challenges. However, the Hamlet recognized the importance of the service and often compensated above the contract value to ensure that weather observer services were available when needed. This dedication underscores the critical nature of the service, which must be reflected in the current funding model.

I urge you to advocate for the Government of Nunavut to take the weather observer function seriously and to ensure that the contract is adequately funded. This includes provisions for callouts and strategies for employee retention to guarantee that our community has access to the vital weather information necessary for emergency operations.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I hope you will support efforts to improve the weather observer function in Kugaaruk and throughout Nunavut, ensuring the safety and health of our community.

Sincerely,

Mayor Teddy Apsaktaun anaijateddy@outlook.com (867) 982-1785 Michelle Byers, MBA Senior Administrative Officer sao@kugaaruk.ca (867) 769-6281