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Nunavunmi Anngutighatigut Aulapkaijitkut Katimajiat
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

ᐃᓄᐃᑦ ᐆᒪᔪᓂᒃ ᐱᐅᖅᓱᐊᕈᓯᖏᓐᓂᒃ ᐆᒪᔪᓕᕆᔾᔪᓯᖏᓐᓂᒡᓗ ᐊᑐᕐᓗᑎᒃ ᐊᒻᒪ ᖃᐅᔨᓴᖅᑎᒪᑏᑦ ᖃᐅᔨᒪᓂᓯᖏᓐᓂᒃ ᐆᒪᔪᓕᕆᔾᔪᑎᖃᕐᓗᑎᒃ, ᐅᓪᓗᒥ ᐃᓄᖃᑎᒌᑦ ᑭᖑᕚᖏᓪᓗ ᐊᖑᓇᓱᒃ ᓇᐃᓐᓇᖅᑐᒥᑦ ᓄᓇᕗᒥ.

Havarhait: Munaritjutikhaitnik angutirhat, hivuniktaulutik tahapkunanga angutirhaliqiniqut pimariuyunik ihumagiyaulluaktaitnik, pitiaqattiriqnahuaklutik Inuinait attuqparhimayaitnik angutirhanik atturhimaaklugit, innutiaqutirhait ihumagilugit tahapkua ublumi angunahuaktiuyut innuqutaitlu tatvalu kinguvarhavut tahamani Nunavumi.

Managing wildlife, guided by conservation principles, honouring the key role of Inuit in harvesting, for the well-being of current and future generations in Nunavut.

By Email

August 21, 2025

Gabriel Nirlungayuk
Director, Wildlife and Environment Department
Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

Re: NTI Letter Dated July 23, 2025 – Basic Needs Level for Southampton Island Caribou

Dear Mr. Nirlungayuk,

Thank you for your letter of July 23, 2025, concerning the NWMB's process toward the establishment of the Basic Needs Level for the Southampton Island caribou herd. We welcome the opportunity to clarify our position and respond to your specific questions.

Response to Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.'s Questions

1. **Commercial harvests included in the Harvest Study**
   As communicated in the July 18, 2024, NWMB policy memo, the NWMB will rely on the interpretation of the Nunavut Wildlife Harvest Study Steering Committee that:

   "basic needs refers to the amount of harvest which is currently taken for domestic and cultural purposes. …. Harvesting or gathering for the purpose of obtaining skins, feathers, dog food, craft materials etc. would all be acknowledged "basic needs" components if the end use occurred in the hunter's community or entered into inter-settlement trade. Apparently, not eligible for consideration as an item of "basic need", would be material harvested or gathered for commercial sale as food outside the NSA."

   While there may have been confusion in the wording of the NWMB staff memo, I confirm that all data retained in the Harvest Study database—such as fur-bearer harvests and records indicating local commercial sale (e.g., to Hunters and Trappers Organizations or local stores)—remain included in the Basic Needs Level calculations.

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2. **Has the NWMB abandoned its original interpretation of what constitutes a Basic Needs Level.**
   The NWMB has not abandoned its deliberative process on the inclusions in Basic Needs Level calculations and the current process is a continuation of the NWMB work to implement the Basic Needs Level.

   It is important to note that, as no final decision was ever reached through confirmation by the Minister, any preliminary views expressed by the NWMB or any other party—including the Board's 2009 position on the Meehan opinion—were part of the deliberative process and should not be considered to be definitive conclusions of the Board.

   With respect to the Meehan brief, I would like to state that while the Board may from time to time seek additional information, expertise, or arguments that may help it decide a matter, the Board is not bound by any such positions in the exercise of its mandate as the main instrument of wildlife management within the Nunavut Settlement Area.

   The NWMB July 18, 2024, policy memo followed a careful internal review that considered the positions of all the parties, including past NWMB processes and legal opinions. Through this process, the Board determined that moving forward, it will rely on Steering Committee's interpretation of what should be included in the Basic Needs Level.

3. **Five years prior to the imposition of a Total Allowable Harvest**
   I can confirm that Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. is correct that the interim Total Allowable Harvest imposed in 2012 constrained harvest levels that year. Accordingly, the NWMB accepts that the proper reference period under section 5.6.23(b) of the Nunavut Agreement should be 2007–2011, rather than the 2008–2012 period referenced.

4. **Records from other Kivalliq communities**
   Based on NWMB interpretation of S.5.6.19, the Basic Needs Level follows the establishment of a Total Allowable Harvest. In the case of Southampton Island Caribou, a community Total Allowable Harvest for Coral Harbour is the basis for striking the Basic Needs Level.

   While the NWMB is committed to ensuring that all relevant co-management partners are included in these discussions openly and transparently, the only Nunavut community affected by the Southampton Island Caribou Total Allowable Harvest for which the NWMB intends to strike the Basic Needs Level is Coral Harbour.

NWMB staff plan to continue public education about the Basic Needs Level and its place in the Nunavut Wildlife Management System, including presentations delivered at Regional Wildlife Board annual general meetings.

I trust that the above addresses your questions.

The NWMB values its collaborative relationship with Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and all co-management partners and I look forward to continuing our collaboration and work to ensure effective wildlife management.

Sincerely,

Jason Akearok
NWMB Executive Director

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