

We would like to thank the Board for organizing this Public Hearing to ensure they have the required information to consider the question of the Northern Boundary of the Eastern Hudson Bay management zone. We would also like to thank the Anguvigait for their detailed questions and responses.

The submission and summary presentation provided by DFO science clearly demonstrates the concerns we have regarding adjustments to the boundary. While we were not able to provide our standpoint on the potential impacts of a voluntary summer closure in Inukjuak, should the Board request it, we can look into this proposal further.

As touched on in our response to Question 19 from the Question Period, the 2014 decision to divide the Eastern Hudson Bay zone into the Eastern and Northeastern zones (Res #2014-03-16) was predicated on increased sampling to confirm the proportions of EHB and non-EHB beluga harvested in these zones. A decade later there is still insufficient genetic data. We have significant concerns about making further boundary adjustments on the condition that sampling will be conducted after the fact.

We acknowledge the hardships and difficulties that beluga management measures have had on Nunavimmiut, many of which have been detailed in the Anguvigaq submission. We also acknowledge the point presented by the Anguvigaq that indicates the whales passing by Inukjuak are migratory and of mixed stock. However given the low population estimates from the most recent aerial survey and finding that the Inukjuak area represents the northern end of the summering distribution of the BEL-EHB beluga stock based on satellite-tracking data, we are wary of any adjustments that could put increased pressure on the EHB beluga stock and believe that a cautious approach, involving more research and sampling, is necessary to better understand the beluga habitat use around Inukjuak prior to any boundary movement.