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Association de chasse, de pêche et de piégeage du Nunavik
Nunavik Hunting Fishing and Trapping Association

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December 11, 2023

Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board
c/o Iola Metuq
P.O. Box 433
Inukjuak, QC
J0M 1M0, CANADA

Re: Reassessing the Eastern Hudson Bay Arc boundary

To the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board,

We are writing to you today from the Anguvigaq (RNUK) to request a reassessment of the Eastern Hudson Bay Arc boundaries as they are delimited in the current Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB) beluga management decisions. Our mandate according to the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement (NILCA), which you are already familiar with, is to manage harvesting among the LNUKs, to monitor and regulate harvesting practices and techniques, and to recommend wildlife management measures to the NMRWB.

The Eastern Hudson Bay Arc region, which includes the communities of Kuujjuarapik, Umiujaq, and Inukjuak, has been limited to a Total Allowable Take (TAT) in the current management plan. This has significant impacts on food security, cultural practices, and knowledge sharing with youth. One of the stocks for which there is an identified conservation concern is the Eastern Hudson Bay (EHB) stock, and restrictions on harvesting in Nunavik have focused on protecting this stock. One hundred percent of belugas harvested in the Arc region are assumed to be from the Eastern Hudson Bay stock, which is the reason for a TAT in this region.

In discussions with the impacted communities this fall, it has come to our attention that the location of the northern boundary of the Eastern Hudson Bay Arc is disputed by local knowledge holders. The line runs along the 59th parallel (from 59°00'00" N 80°00'00" W to 59°00'00" N 78°20'00" W), which does not reflect the biological realities of Eastern Hudson Bay belugas and is resulting in significant impacts on those communities, Inukjuak in particular. In Inukjuak, hunters see mixed groups of whales and five beluga recently harvested in Ikirasaaluq, an area just north of Inukjuak, were all identified as non-EHB beluga (i.e. no EHB genetic signatures). Furthermore, in looking through the previous management plans for the origins of this boundary there is no clear rationale for why the line was put along the 59th parallel in the first place.

We would like to recommend that the NMRWB reassess the northern boundary based on the best available scientific research and Inuit knowledge and consider moving the boundary further south. Our executives have information to submit in order to support the NMRWB in their decision making, and from conversations with the communities we believe that local hunters will also have valuable input that should be considered in determining where the boundary of the Arc should be.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Palliser', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Billy Palliser
Vice President, Anguvigaq (RNUK)