



July 2, 2019

Mr. Gabriel Nirlungayuk | ᓄᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᓄᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ  
 Regional Director General, Arctic Region | ᐱᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᓄᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᐱᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᓄᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ, ᐱᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᓄᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ  
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 Fisheries and Oceans Canada | ᐱᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᓄᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᐱᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᓄᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ ᓄᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ  
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Dear Mr. Nirlungayuk,

**Re: Proposal to create new Arctic Region for Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Canadian Coast Guard**

The Land and Water Boards (LWBs or Boards) of the Mackenzie Valley (Gwich'in, Mackenzie Valley, Sahtu, and Wek'èezhii Land and Water Boards), would like to thank the Government of Canada for the presentation made on May 31, 2019, and the opportunity to provide comments on a proposal to create a new Arctic Region for Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the Canadian Coast Guard.

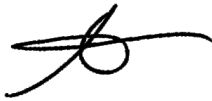
The integrated system of land and water management in the Mackenzie Valley set out by Land Claim Agreements and the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (MVRMA) depends on the fulsome participation of responsible authorities such as DFO. The Boards rely on the expert advice of the responsible authorities to make informed decisions both on a project-specific basis and in a general way (e.g. with the aid of best practice guidance documents). The Boards note that the shift to the more centralized triage system in the past has resulted in a less efficient and effective system and has resulted in delays in various licensing processes, which is problematic to the operator and all stakeholders involved. The LWBs have met with DFO staff to discuss this on numerous occasions. The LWBs highlight the importance of local resource management staff and the public having the ability to directly communicate and work with local, knowledgeable DFO staff and for these staff to actively participate in the co-management system of the Mackenzie Valley. The LWBs hope that the creation of a new Arctic Region will result in a restoration of local expertise.

The LWBs also note that, in the past, DFO Operational Statements have been very informative for communicating guidance and the results of DFO and other relevant ecosystem research to proponents and all stakeholders, and are practical (e.g. have been directly referenced by the LWBs in conditions of their authorizations). The LWBs recommend that DFO Operational Statements should be re-instated.

LWB staff would be pleased to discuss these comments and recommendations further. Again, we would like to thank the Government of Canada for the opportunity to provide these views.

Please feel free to contact Sarah Elsasser at (867) 446-5963 or [selsasser@wlwb.ca](mailto:selsasser@wlwb.ca) should you require more information or to initiate a meeting.

Sincerely,



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