



October 31, 2016

Hon. Robert C. McLeod  
Minister of Environment and Natural Resources  
PO Box 1320, Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9

*Delivered via email*

Dear Minister McLeod:

**RE: Minister's Response to SRRB *ᐅᕈᕈᑦ ᕈᕈᕈᑦ ᕈᕈᕈᑦ ᑕᑕᑦᑎᑦ* – *Sustaining Relationships* Report on Bluenose East *ᐅᕈᕈᑦ* (Caribou) Hearing 2016 and the Délı̨ne *Belare wı̨le ᑕᑕᑦᑎᑦ* *ᐅᕈᕈᑦ* Plan**

On October 20, 2016, the ᐅᕈᕈᕐ ᑕᑕᑦᑎᑦ ᑕᑕᑦᑎᑦ ᑕᑕᑦᑎᑦ (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board – SRRB), Délı̨ne *ᐅᕈᕈᑦ* (Caribou) Working Group<sup>1</sup> and Délı̨ne ᐅᕈᕈᕐ ᑕᑕᑦᑎᑦ (Renewable Resources Council) met to review and discuss your September 26, 2016 response to the SRRB's July 28, 2016 Report on the Bluenose East *ᐅᕈᕈᑦ* Hearing.

The SRRB and Délı̨ne parties appreciate the Minister's support for the community *ᐅᕈᕈᑦ* conservation planning process proposed in the Délı̨ne plan and approved by the SRRB. We also appreciate the Minister's support in principle for key aspects of the Délı̨ne plan, as supported by the Board, including community harvest monitoring, programs to support alternative harvest, and community enforcement of the plan.

We note that you have requested changes to some aspects of the Délı̨ne plan, and variances to some of Board's decisions. The Board and the Délı̨ne parties are each responding separately and in more detail to your letter and the changes you have requested to the Délı̨ne plan.

The Board and Délı̨ne share the view that some of your requests for changes to the Board's decision and Délı̨ne plan point out a significant difference in approach to conservation planning. These requested revisions also reflect different conservation priorities than those highlighted in the Board report and Délı̨ne plan.

The difference in approaches is clearer when looking at the Délı̨ne plan and Board report as a whole rather than individual decisions. We appreciate that ENR, the Board and Délı̨ne are continuing to better understand how to support community conservation planning. We recognize that together we are breaking new ground in this process. In that spirit, we wish to share our understanding of the basic differences between the conservation approach shown in your responses and the approach shown in the Délı̨ne plan and SRRB report.

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<sup>1</sup> The Délı̨ne *ᐅᕈᕈᑦ* Working Group is composed of representatives of the Délı̨ne ᐅᕈᕈᕐ ᑕᑕᑦᑎᑦ and Délı̨ne K'áowe ke as well as knowledgeable elders, women and youth.

The Board and D l n  continue to hold the belief that the best conservation outcomes will be a result of implementing a community conservation planning process, and that supporting the community conservation planning process represents the best precautionary approach to prevent further herd decline.

The foundation of the community conservation planning process is looking at the proposed approach to harvesting overall (including many integrated factors such as harvest locations, harvest times, harvest preparation, community education wastage prevention, alternative harvest incentives, and addressing non-harvesting drivers of herd decline such as climate change, wildfires and industrial development) rather than focusing simply on harvest numbers.

D l n  maintained in the Hearing, and the Board agreed in its report, that given the evidence on the current status of the herd and the current ability of the community to develop its own conservation plan, it is not appropriate to invoke the total allowable harvest (TAH) mechanisms under the Land Claim Agreement at this time. Your request for changes to the harvest management plan that focus solely on the numbers for harvest limits imply to community members that a TAH and numbers approach is still being imposed from the outside rather than the support for the alternative community conservation planning that the Board found will reach the best conservation outcomes.

Specifically, your response requests that D l n  and the Board consider a harvest limit based on evidence that was not presented to, or tested by, the Board and the parties in the BNE hearing. You also request an amendment to limit ts da (female) harvest to five ts da, rather than a majority y r go (young male) harvest with a 20% limit on females. These suggested changes appear to be based primarily on recommendations from other regions, but are not supported by the science and strong traditional knowledge evidence in the BNE Hearing, nor by any new evidence presented after the hearing.

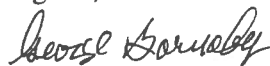
We are also deeply concerned that these suggested changes are not consistent with the principle of recognizing the D l n  community consensus process supported by Dene n ower  (traditional knowledge) and    a (laws) is the most effective mechanism for conservation planning when a precautionary approach is required.

We recognize you are concerned about cross regional coordination of conservation efforts for the herd. We believe this can be achieved despite different conservation mechanisms in adjacent regions, when everyone's share goal is conservation.

The best conservation planning process, we believe, is one that brings together the  ekw  users to share information and plan the annual harvest. Such a process can address intended harvest locations tied to particular harvest times, and monitoring plans to ensure tracking of harvest rates and when it is time to give  ekw  a rest.

We also suggest that the Minister commit to further discussion with the D l n  Got' n  Government and GNWT to ensure that there is consensus on how to move forward.

Signed,



George Barnaby, Vice Chair  
 ehdzo Got' n  Gots'  N ked   
Sah  Renewable Resources Board



Raymond Tutcho  
 ekw'at d  (Chief)  
D l n  Got' n  Government



Russell Kenny, Vice President  
D l n   ehdzo Got' n   
Renewable Resources Council