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AAA הערשיירטיל Cree Nation Government Gouvernement de la Nation Crie



Friday, April 11, 2025

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MoCreebec Jb∴V<sup>b</sup> Closing statement of the Cree Nation Government/Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and Cree Trappers' Association for the Phase 02 of the Polar Bear Public hearing

**CONSIDERING THAT** polar bear surveys conducted by the governments of Quebec and Ontario every five years do not indicate imminent conservation concerns regarding the abundance of the Southern Hudson Bay (SHB) polar bear subpopulation,

**CONSIDERING THAT** significant efforts are being made to implement effective Cree and Inuit polar bear harvest monitoring in the joint zone territory,

**CONSIDERING THAT** the Cree Nation Government/Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and Cree Trappers' Association believe that both Non-quota Limitations (NQL) and Total Allowable Take (TAT) cannot adequately manage harvest where defense of life and property (DLP) kills account for the majority of harvests,

**CONSIDERING THAT** defense of life and property kills are the primary cause for Cree polar bear harvests in Eeyou Istchee,

The Cree Nation Government/Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and Cree Trappers' Association stand in support of Makkivik's suggestion to adopt an adaptive approach to polar bear management in the Cree and Inuit Joint zone territory. We believe that allowing the Eeyou and Inuit to manage polar bear harvests locally, in accordance with the communities' needs for food, security, and cultural practices is essential for sustainable and respectful wildlife management of this species.

Additionally, the Cree Trappers' Association, in alignment with the Eeyou Indoh-hoh Weeshuu-wehwun (Eeyou Hunting Law), could further support this adaptive management strategy in the Cree side of the joint zone territory. Furthermore, educating Eeyou on safe interactions with polar bears should be prioritized to reduce the need for DLP kills. The efforts of Cree Trappers' Association Eeyou Marine Region Department and the EMRWB in delivering polar bear safety trainings in the communities underscore their commitment to both polar bear conservation and the safety of the Eeyou.

To ensure the long-term success of this management approach for the SHB polar bear subpopulation, we advocate for periodic reassessment of local harvest management practices. These reassessments should be based on a combination of Cree and Inuit traditional knowledge, Cree and Inuit SHB polar bear subpopulation monitoring, Cree and Inuit polar bear harvest numbers and western science.

The Cree Nation Government/Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and Cree Trappers' Association are committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure that polar bear management in the Cree and Inuit Joint zone territory is sustainable, culturally appropriate, and beneficial for all Cree First Nations and Inuit.