



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

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Canada

Regional Director
General

1 Arctic Road
Inuvik District Office
Inuvik, NT

Directeur général
régional

1 route de l'Arctique
Bureau de district d'Inuvik
Inuvik, NT

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
501 University Crescent
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N6

January 20, 2026

To:

Ms. Dionne Filiatrault
Nunavut Impact Review Board
29 Mitik Street, PO Box 1360
Cambridge Bay, NU X0B 0C0

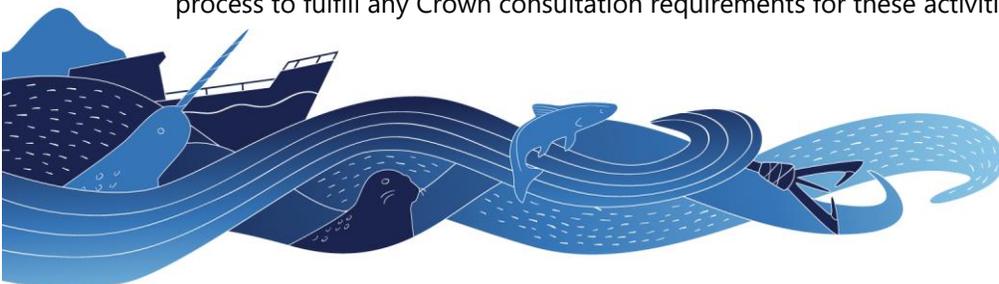
Subject: Schedule 12-1 Exemption

Dear Dionne Filiatrault,

I am writing on behalf of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to request an exemption from the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) screening process for activities requiring a License to Fish for Scientific Purposes under s. 52 of the *Fisheries (General) Regulation*, SOR/93-53 and/or Authorized Disturbance of Marine Mammals under s. 38 of the *Marine Mammal Regulations*, SOR/93-56.

As you know, section 7 of Schedule 12-1 of the *Nunavut Land Claim Agreement* states that NIRB and the appropriate Minister can agree on categories of activities and projects that will be exempt from screening.

Before any issuance of any license to conduct activities under a License to Fish for Scientific Purposes and/or Authorized Disturbance of Marine Mammals, DFO conducts a thorough analysis of the activities, methods, and purposes before the issuance of a license. This review is conducted through several sectors within DFO, including a scientific review conducted by our Science sector, a review by our Resource Management team, which reviews for cumulative ecosystemic and socio-economic impacts, as well as our Animal Care Committee, which reviews projects to ensure proper care of fish and marine mammals. Moreover, DFO requires that all projects receive a letter of support from the local communities/HTOs, ensuring that community-level engagement has occurred and issues and concerns are addressed before any project is approved. DFO does not rely on the NIRB screening process to fulfill any Crown consultation requirements for these activities.



We understand that under the *Nunavut Agreement* and the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*, the NIRB has discretion to determine whether a review is required. We believe that, given the NIRB's extensive experience with screening research projects, the Board will recognize that the specific activities covered under this request undergo a thorough review process by DFO and co-management partners and, as such, are good candidates for a screening exemption agreement.

In 2025, DFO Arctic Licensing instituted a requirement for NPC/NIRB authorization before issuing Licenses to Fish for Scientific Purposes for research projects. This resulted in at least 16 proposals being submitted to the Nunavut Planning Commission, with the majority forwarded to the NIRB for screening. This significantly increased the administrative burden for the NIRB, which requested extensions from the Minister of Fisheries for many project screenings, including those of academics. All of the DFO projects screened by the NIRB were for typical DFO research projects, and all were deemed low-impact.

Should additional documentation or clarification be required, we would be happy to provide detailed project descriptions, maps, and summaries of anticipated fieldwork. We are committed to engaging with local communities and organizations to ensure transparency and collaboration.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response. For further discussion on this topic, please contact Chantelle.Sawatzky@dfo-mpo.gc.ca and Colin.Blanchette@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

Sincerely,

Amy Amos
Regional Director General, Arctic Region

Cc
Tara Arko, NIRB Director of Operations
Joe Justus, Regional Director Science, DFO
Jason Stow, Division Manager, DFO Science
Colin Blanchette, Regional Manager, DFO Fisheries Management

