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Comité consultatif de l'environnement Kativik  
Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee

February 16, 2024

Lisa Lowman  
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Environment and Climate Change Canada  
510-234 Donald Street  
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**Subject: KEAC feedback on the FCSAP Indigenous Knowledge & Science Focus Group Meeting**

Dear Ms. Lowman,

The Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee (KEAC) would firstly like to thank the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER) and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) for the invitation to be a part of the Federal Contaminated Sites Action Plan (FCSAP) Indigenous Knowledge & Science Focus Group. Considering our historical involvement in the application of the FCSAP in Nunavik, coupled with the understanding of community-run remediation projects in the region, participating in the focus group, the KEAC is providing our feedback following the in-group session that was held on January 31, 2024.

**Inuit Qauijimajatuqangit**

Inuit Qauijimajatuqangit (IQ) principles are Inuit societal values that guide all aspects of social living. They are intended to be used across all sectors to guide respectful relationships, management practices, and governance. IQ also sets the strength-based context for the wellbeing of all future generations and is meant to encompass local as well as community-based knowledge, ecological knowledge (both traditional and contemporary), which is rooted in the daily life of Inuit and has an important contribution to make to impact assessments.

Aligning with our regional partners, the KEAC are of the opinion that IQ, and consequently Indigenous Knowledge (IK), is intrinsically connected to the knowledge holder, and in this sense, cannot properly be integrated in policy or decision-making unless those knowledge holders participate in those processes, in the manner and capacity they deem appropriate, whether that be in an Inuit organization, or alongside non-Inuit decision makers within other institutions. The recognition that such knowledge can contribute to the conservation of biodiversity, rare species, protected areas, ecological processes and to sustainable resource

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use in general is an important element for the federal government when implementing any program, including FCSAP, in Nunavik.

In terms of FCSAP, knowledge holders can and should fully participate in the assessment, remediation, risk management and long-term monitoring components of the plan's implementation, when they are concerned by those sites (e.g., to prioritize the sites to be remediated; to inform the planning of that remediation; to partake in the long-term monitoring, etc.), and in respect of their capacity.

### **Comments from the in-session meeting**

The KEAC wish to take this opportunity to reiterate some of the comments brought forth during the January 31 meeting.

- More transparency with indigenous communities is required regarding the FCSAP program.
- Training and capacity building for community representatives is essential to improve their involvement during all phases of contaminated site identification, remediation, and management.
- The program's remediation objectives must take into account the specific concerns of the communities, their use of the sites, and environmental considerations.
- Community engagement is important at all phases of any remediation effort and should include consideration for regional expertise and community resources which may provide services during remediation activities.
- There is a need to strengthen the relationship between federal departments and communities regarding contaminated sites such as designating a liaison person to simplify communications and more events that allow for networking between Indigenous communities and governments to share solutions or experiences regarding the management of contaminated sites.
- The current National Classification System does not recognize Indigenous land management systems and as such, a new or updated system should be considered.
- Project timelines must be better adapted to community knowledge and available resources.
- Local land users and their representative organizations can assist with identifying and classifying sites, and as such should receive adequate training.
- A list of program related resources from federal departments, regional entities, and communities should be available as reference and to improve communication.
- Consider terminology, vocabulary, and language when consulting with communities.

### **Other initiatives to be aware of**

- Atanniuvik is Nunavik's new research governance organization. The purpose of Atanniuvik is to ensure that research is truly serving Nunavimmiut well-being, and that Nunavimmiut are the decision-makers on research that is about them and their homeland. Through reviewing and approving research, Atanniuvik will ensure that those involved in research in Nunavik are better informed about Inuit culture and values, and that traditional knowledge will be recognized and taken into account.

- Through its Evaluation of the Northern and Arctic Environmental Sustainability (NAES) Program, Crown-Indigenous Relations, and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) has identified that although NAES represents an improved integration of Indigenous knowledge with Western science, gaps remain.
  - Some Indigenous partners indicate Indigenous knowledge is effectively balanced, others feel it can be more fulsomely leveraged to inform decision making.
  - The integration of Indigenous knowledge is facilitated by a two-way flow of knowledge and strong relationships.
  - As Western research and non-Indigenous institutions value quantified data, it can be difficult for Indigenous knowledge to be treated equally.
  - Indigenous partners are concerned that NAES may prioritize international commitments over their needs.
  - Indigenous knowledge is often used in research design, but less so in subsequent stages.
  - Indigenous knowledge may not fully impact decision making.
- Makivvik Corporation has produced two submission papers related to Canada's Indigenous Knowledge Policy Framework. The key principles from these submissions include:
  - IK is intrinsically connected to the knowledge holder, and in this sense, cannot properly be integrated in policy or decision-making unless those IK holders participate in those processes, in the manner and capacity they deem appropriate, whether it be by an Inuit organization, or alongside non-Inuit decision makers within other institutions.
  - Transparency is another key principle: to explain to the IK holders how the IK was understood and integrated in the policy/decision.
  - Recognition and upholding of IK holders' rights over their knowledge is important.
  - Inuit leaders, through their governance and decision-making as well as their knowledge of the communities, the land, the needs, and the priorities of the region, can influence the agenda for policy, legislative, funding and program development.

### **Sites of Concern for Nunavummiut**

The following is a list of sites of concern for Nunavummiut previously provide to CIER in May 2023 and ECC in November 2019. These sites are of major importance to the communities concerned and to the KEAC, and their restoration is considered a priority. However, a lack of follow-up on the part of parties responsible for these sites has been noted, and the committee therefore wishes to bring these sites back to your attention and requests an update.

### The Northern Village of Kuujuaq

From 1941- 45 the US Air Force occupied a base on the western shore of the Koksoak River. After the end of World War II, the United States turned the base over to the Canadian government. This base makes up part of what is now known as the Northern Village of Kuujuaq, the largest of the 14 Nunavik communities.

For many years residents have voiced apprehension about various debris, such as barrels and metal, as well as contaminated soil in the areas the US Air Force base.

In February 2022, the KEAC attended an information session along with the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) and several provincial and federal departments in which many actions were proposed to address the situation in Kuujuaq, but the KEAC has not been privy to their implementation.

### Akpatok Island

Akpatok Island is uninhabited and the largest island in Ungava Bay. The island is named for the Akpat, the thick-billed murre which live on ledges along the limestone cliffs surrounding the island. This island is very important for the Inuit of Nunavik, rich in both traditional hunting and cultural significance. In July 1971 an exploratory oil well was drilled on the island. However, after failing to find oil, all equipment and shelters were abandoned and remain on the island.

In 2018 the Contaminated Sites Directorate for CIRNAC received reports that some fuel drums were observed leaking at the contaminated site located on the western shore of Akpatok Island, located on Crown land. In response, CIRNAC dispatched a consultant to the Island on September 27, 2018, to transfer the contents of the leaking fuel drums to more suitable containers for storage until arrangements can be made for their future removal from site. Many of these drums were rusted and observed in poor condition.

The KEAC are aware that CIRNAC successfully completed a Phase III ESA in August 2020 at the site. In 2020 we were also informed that next steps for the federal department included the development of a preliminary Remedial Action Plan and future engagement sessions with concerned communities and other stakeholders to shape the final remediation plans for the site. Since then, the KEAC has not been informed of any advancement regarding the remediation of Akpatok Island.

### Killiniq

The community of Killiniq, also known as Port Burwell, is located at the northeastern most point of Nunavik, in the Ungava Bay, at the mouth of Hudson Strait. Until 1978, Killiniq was administered by the Northwest Territories government at which point it was closed. Most Killiniq residents moved to Kangiqsualujuaq, while others moved to various other communities in Nunavik and Nunavut.

Under the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement, Killiniq residents still have rights to lands there. In the 1990s efforts were made to support the move for some of Killiniq's original families back to the area but the lack of

services made resettling difficult. In 1994 the Makivvik Corporation initiated a partial cleanup of infrastructure as well as residual and hazardous materials remaining at the site.

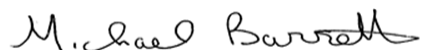
In 2013, the Government of Nunavut (GN) recommended Phase III ESA at the site however, it was considered as a low priority. In 2018 the KEAC and KRG, along with members of the Kangiqsualujjuaq community, visited the location by helicopter and took aerial photos.

In 2022, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans contacted the KEAC to explain that, along with the Canadian Coast Guard, they were planning to sample soil at the site to confirm the success of previous remedial activities and gather updated data for any potential areas of concern that remain and to determine if further environmental investigations and/or remediation activities are required. They had also requested contacts for the community of Kangiqsualujjuaq so that they may be part of this work. Since then, the KEAC has had no further information regarding the remediation of Killiniq.

## Conclusion

The KEAC are of the opinion that the commitment for the incorporation of IQ and IK into regulatory frameworks may also reflect a widespread concern regarding the social and economic sustainability of natural resource-based livelihoods throughout the world, including those of Nunavimmiut. As such, the committee encourages the federal government's initiative and further engagement with IQ holders and regional entities in Nunavik.

Best regards,



Michael Barrett  
Vice-Chairperson, KEAC