

NEWS RELEASE



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Fisheries Issues Narwhal Tusk Ban Without Consulting Inuit

(December 15, 2010 -- Iqaluit, Nunavut) Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. President Cathy Towtongie today called on the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to immediately reverse their decision to restrict the trade of narwhal tusks for 17 Nunavut communities.

DFO notified NTI of the ban last week. NTI was not made aware of the restriction prior to it being imposed, and Inuit were not consulted. DFO's actions violate Inuit harvesting rights as set out in the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*.

"DFO does not have the right to impose such restrictions upon Inuit, particularly when the population is thriving, and harvest numbers do not threaten the species," said Towtongie. "NTI is considering legal options at this time."

According to the DFO order, CITES export permits will not be issued for tusks harvested from Grise Fiord, Arctic Bay, Resolute Bay, Clyde River, Qikiqtarjuaq, Pangnirtung, Iqaluit, Kimmirut, Cape Dorset, Coral Harbour, Repulse Bay, Hall Beach, Chesterfield Inlet, Rankin Inlet, Whale Cove, Arviat and Sanikiluaq. Communities permitted to continue to export narwhal tusks are Kugaaruk, Taloyoak, Gjoa Haven, Igloodik, and Pond Inlet.

"DFO's decision appears to be based upon faulty scientific data, although we don't know because they have not consulted Inuit," said Towtongie. Scientific surveys estimate the narwhal population to be 80,000 strong in Canada. Inuit harvest approximately 500 per year.

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