

# NEWS RELEASE



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## NTI Remains Opposed to EU Seal Skin Ban

(August 6, 2015 – Iqaluit, Nunavut) Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. Vice-President James Eetoolook today reiterated that NTI continues to oppose the European Union's ban on Canadian seal skins. Eetoolook's comments followed the announcement that the EU formally approved the Government of Nunavut's certification program under the Indigenous Communities Exemption of the EU Seal Regime.

"For the record, NTI continues to strongly oppose the European ban on Canadian seal skins. Canada's seal harvest is humane and sustainable. The European Union's ban is based on misinformation and misguided public opinion, not any conservation concerns. Seal populations thrive both in Atlantic and Arctic waters. In fact, the EU had to recently cull the seal population because they are considered a threat to fish stocks," said Eetoolook.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans met with NTI and the GN earlier this year to discuss the establishment of a certificate program based on the existing tracking system in Nunavut. The GN's fur program has a method of tracking each seal skin in the system with a bar code. The certification program is intended to meet the EU exemption requirements of identifying seal skins that are harvested from Aboriginal communities as part of the subsistence harvest. The EU said this week it accepted the tracking system in Nunavut to make seal skins exportable to EU countries. Eetoolook said NTI would closely monitor the how the exemption is working.

The exemption means the GN will be able to certify that seal skins were harvested according to the rules of the exemption, which will allow Nunavut harvesters to sell their seal skins and seal skin products in the European market again. Labrador, Northern Quebec and the Northwest Territories do not have systems of tracking seal skins and thus are not eligible for the exemption.

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