

Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation



Presentation to the Environmental Impact Review Board

**Public Meeting For The Proposed Inuvik To Tuktoyaktuk
Highway**

Tuktoyaktuk, NT, September 24 and 25, 2012

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Good day.

On behalf of the Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation and the Inuvialuit of Tuktoyaktuk, welcome to our community.

I would like to share with you brief highlights of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement in relation to the Inuvialuit of Tuktoyaktuk and our community.

The lands surrounding Tuktoyaktuk consists of 700 square miles of Inuvialuit private lands known as 7 (1)(a) lands.

The lands surrounding the area of land and water known as Husky Lakes which is located to the south and eastsoutheast of Tuktoyaktuk are known as Tuktoyaktuk 7(1)(b) lands. This means the Inuvialuit have ownership to the surface rights in these lands.

The same lands surrounding Husky Lakes are also given special recognition in the IFA. The special recognition is found in section 8 of the IFA.

These lands were used by Inuvialuit from Tuktoyaktuk throughout generations and these lands will always be used by Inuvialuit from Tuktoyaktuk. These lands are important to us and were claimed by the Inuvialuit of Tuktoyaktuk in the IFA land claims agreement between Inuvialuit and Canada.

Husky Lakes hold much traditional, cultural and spiritual values for Inuvialuit from Tuktoyaktuk.

I will share with you some of our oral history. This story is taken from the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage (PWNHC) site on the internet:

The Inuktuyuut

The Imaryungmiut were Inuvialuit who lived and hunted at Imaryuk year round. According to legends, Imaryungmiut were a peaceful people, and as a result their neighbours often raided them.

One legend tells about people from Kitigaaryuk coming to steal caribou skins. Although Imaryungmiut elders said that peace was more important than fighting, some of the young men became resentful. One young man took some action.

"He waited until the leader reached the camp. Without warning, he aimed with his bow and killed him. The Kitigaaryungmiut fled in surprise. The Imaryukmiut were astonished that one of their own would kill someone. They said to the young that it was their rule than anything that was killed had to be eaten. One elder cut a small piece of the thigh of the murdered man and made the young Imaryukmiut eat it. From then on he was called an Inuktuyuut - a man-eater. Knowing that the Kitigaaryungmiut would take revenge, they left the area and moved to

the east. It was reported that after many years, one woman reached Greenland."

If you are interested you can listen to Raddi Kuiksak tell this story on the PWNHC website.

This story has much spiritual and cultural significance for Inuvialuit that travel to Husky Lakes for traditional and subsistence purposes.

In the new book titled "Taimani", this story is expanded to include oral history related to Husky Lakes. The story can be found in chapter 1 on page 27. It says:

"Imaryungmiut

Stories from our past tell us about an Inuvialuit group from Immaryuit (Husky Lakes), the Immaryungmiut (the people from Husky Lakes) who disappeared very mysteriously. These people are described as friendly but independent. They did not come to hunt in our areas nor did they come to our winter gatherings. They preferred, it seems, to keep to themselves. Their territory buffered the coastal Inuvialuit from the Itqilit. These Inuvialuit seemed to understand the Itqilit and their ways."

This small part of our oral history gives you an insight as to why the lands and the waters of Husky Lakes are important to us.

I would like to bring to mind the principles that envelope our IFA land claims agreement. The principles in the IFA say:

1. The basic goals expressed by the Inuvialuit and recognized by Canada in concluding this Agreement are:

- (a) to preserve Inuvialuit cultural identity and values within a changing northern society;
- (b) to enable Inuvialuit to be equal and meaningful participants in the northern and national economy and society; and
- (c) to protect and preserve the Arctic wildlife, environment and biological productivity.

These principles are the guiding spirit for our land claims agreement. The spirit of preservation, enablement and protection hold much meaning and intent in the provisions of the IFA.

The IFA also references the bodies that are responsible for implementing, managing and carrying out the responsibilities in the IFA. I will highlight how the Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation is given legal recognition in the IFA:

6.(1) The following bodies shall be responsible for the management of the compensation and benefits received by the Inuvialuit pursuant to this Agreement:

- (b) one Inuvialuit community corporation, without share capital, for each community, together to control the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation;

6.(4) The following principles shall apply to the bodies described in subsection (1):

(c) control of the Inuvialuit corporations shall be vested in the Inuvialuit beneficiaries through the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and their community corporations. Control of each community corporations shall be vested in the Inuvialuit resident in that community;

This is why I am before you today. I will point out to you the matters that must be taken into account for the proposed Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway.

The proposed highway is important. It will become a permanent feature within our traditional lands and region. We have vested interest to make sure our way of life, traditions, culture and livelihood continues within our Inuvialuit Settlement Region and our private lands once the highway is completed.

The Inuvialuit Lands Administration (ILA) has an important role in the management of Inuvialuit private lands. A few years ago the ILA was given the challenge to develop a policy for Husky Lakes area. This policy took many years to develop and many challenges and obstacles were faced in the development of this policy. The title of this policy is "Husky Lakes Special Cultural Area Criteria". I would like to make reference to the executive summary of this policy. It says:

"One of the most striking features of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region is a series of interconnecting lakes that are collectively known as Husky Lakes. These saline lakes are located to the south and southeast of the community of Tuktoyaktuk,

roughly between Latitudes 68°42' and 69°38' N and Longitudes 133°30 and 130°50' W. The lakes provide habitat suited for a wide variety of wildlife, both aquatic and terrestrial, which are important resources to the Inuvialuit. For many centuries, the wildlife in and around Husky Lakes has been harvested for food and fur by the Inuvialuit and the lakes have been used for transport. Similarly, the lands and waters that make up Husky Lakes are highly important to the Inuvialuit from a spiritual and cultural perspective. As a result, sustaining the environmental integrity of the Husky Lakes area is a crucial aspect of land management strategies designed to preserve Inuvialuit history and identity."

The Inuvialuit of Tuktoyaktuk still view the main intent of the IFA and the organizations and institutions established in the IFA such as the Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation is to uphold the principles and the provisions of the IFA.

The protection and the promotion of our traditional and cultural way of life in Husky Lakes is still a vital part of our life and we want to keep it going and keep it strong.

The Inuvialuit of Tuktoyaktuk want to see our wildlife, birds and marine life protected and ensure they have a safe and secure environment from one generation to the next generation.

We are in favour of a permanent highway between Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik. We welcome the highway.

We will continue our obligation to protect and enhance our traditional and cultural way of life. We will do our duty to preserve, enable and protect our Inuvialuit way of life and uphold the principles in the IFA.

We believe the construction and maintenance of the proposed highway and our way of life as Inuvialuit can co-exist and be a blessing and benefit to all people involved.

The proposed highway will provide for an economic base and spur growth in other aspects of our community during the construction and annual maintenance of the highway.

The highway between Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik is expected to lower the high cost of living in our community and we welcome this expectation.

The highway will provide training and journeyman careers related in the construction and maintenance of the highway and we welcome these opportunities for Inuvialuit of Tuktoyaktuk.

The TCC would like Inuvialuit businesses from Tuktoyaktuk are significantly involved in the construction and the maintenance of the proposed highway. The Inuvialuit in Tuk and Inuvik should receive first opportunities for business, employment and training. Tuktoyaktuk businesses and workers should represent 75% of the project opportunities on the Tuktoyaktuk portion of the project. The involvement of the businesses and people of Tuk should be confirmed prior to

construction of the highway. The TCC should receive weekly reports confirming the involvement of businesses and workers from Tuk and any shortfalls in the percentage should be resolved immediately.

I would like the EIRB panel to remember the interest for a proposed highway between Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik began in the 1970's. It is important to point out the Inuvialuit had not been involved in these proposals for the highway in the early years. When government studied and chose the proposed routing for the Tuktoyaktuk to Inuvik highway they did not include or take into account Inuvialuit interests.

I remind you the Inuvialuit of Tuktoyaktuk have travelled this land of ours for many generations. We travelled from around Tuktoyaktuk to the southern parts of our settlement region even before there were communities such as Inuvik. We know the favourable routes from Tuktoyaktuk to southern parts of our settlement region. The favourable routing between Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik is known today as the Elders route.

Another important factor to take into account is the impacts the construction of permanent roads have on traditionally sensitive and environmentally sensitive areas in our settlement region. Let us rely and depend on the TCC, THTC and the IFA agencies and provisions to minimize these impacts

Now let me review the discussions, meetings and talks over the last two years concerning the routing for this proposed highway between Tuktoyaktuk and

Inuvik. There was a public meeting held in the community of Tuktoyaktuk in 2011 concerning the proposed highway between Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik. An engineer for the proponents, representatives from ILA, Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk and Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation along with many Inuvialuit from Tuktoyaktuk were present at this meeting. Following much discussion the majority of the public at this meeting favoured the elders route for the proposed highway. It should be noted the public favoured and supported the construction of the proposed highway.

The Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation board of directors passed a formal resolution at a regular meeting of the corporation in 2011 that favoured the elders route for the proposed highway between Tuktoyaktuk to Inuvik.

There is also a formal resolution from the annual general meeting of the Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation held in Tuktoyaktuk on August 16, 2012 that favours the elders route between Tuktoyaktuk to Inuvik for the proposed highway.

I once again emphasize how important the Husky Lakes area is to the Inuvialuit of Tuktoyaktuk. Husky Lakes has always and will always be of traditional, cultural and spiritual importance to the Inuvialuit of Tuktoyaktuk. Oral and written history professes to the importance of Husky Lakes to the Inuvialuit of Tuktoyaktuk.

The Inuvialuit of Tuktoyaktuk favours a permanent highway between Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik with conditions that meet our interests for protecting and preserving

Husky Lakes area. We favour a permanent highway between Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik as long as there is the protection to the environment and the wildlife that use our settlement area near and adjacent to the route.

The Inuvialuit of Tuktoyaktuk favours a highway between Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik if it will provide for jobs and contracts to Inuvialuit and Inuvialuit businesses from Tuktoyaktuk during the construction and maintenance of the highway.

The Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation would like to work with the EIRB, the proponents for the highway, the GNWT, the Town of Inuvik and the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk in an expedient and timely manner to make sure the routing takes into account the interests from the Inuvialuit of Tuktoyaktuk.

The EIRB has the responsibility to ensure our Inuvialuit interests are at the forefront of the construction and maintenance of this proposed highway. The EIRB is in a position to make this proposed highway a reality and make this decision in an expedient and timely manner while taking into account the interests of the Inuvialuit of Tuktoyaktuk.

I will summarize the interests of Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation in regards to the proposed highway between Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik.

The TCC and the people of Tuk are in support of the Highway Project provided:

- **The environment is protected.**
- **The wildlife is protected.**

- The traditional and cultural value of Husky Lakes is protected.
- Inuvialuit in Tuk and Inuvik receive first opportunities for business, employment and training opportunities.
- Tuktoyaktuk businesses and workers should represent 75 % of the project opportunities on the Tuktoyaktuk portion of the project.
- The involvement of the businesses and people of Tuk should be confirmed prior to construction.
- The TCC should receive weekly reports confirming the involvement of businesses and workers from Tuk and any shortfalls in the percentage should be resolved immediately.
- The TCC and the people of Tuk are prepared to discuss and finalize the routing of the Highway with the Proponents.
- The TCC and the people do not wish to delay the project and wish to finalize the routing as soon as possible.
- The routing should recognize the cultural and traditional value of Husky Lakes and any routing of the highway should be a minimum distance from any cabins or Husky Lakes itself, for example near the area we call 'Rough Hills' and Zed Lake.
- A significant part of the routing of the highway will be on Tuk 7(1)(a) and 7(1)(b) lands and we recommend the responsibility for officially naming the Tuktoyaktuk to Inuvik highway be given to the Inuvialuit of Tuktoyaktuk.

Quyanainni, thank you for the opportunity to make this important presentation to the EIRB panel.

Respectfully submitted to the EIRB hearings on behalf of the Tuktoyaktuk
Community Corporation board of directors and the Inuvialuit of Tuktoyaktuk.