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Elizabeth Copland
Nunavut Impact Review Board
Cambridge Bay, NU. X0B 0C0
Faxed to: (867) 983-2594

RE: Bathurst Port and Road Project

Dear Ms. Copland,

I would like to submit a letter regarding the Bathurst Port and Road Project, and apologize for doing it at the last minute, but have been up at Bathurst Inlet and on the Hope Bay Belt until a couple days ago.

I am the Program Director and staff naturalist for Bathurst Inlet Lodge, and have been working with the lodge for 30 summers now. In this capacity, I not only handle natural history interpretation for the guests, but also handle marketing and training for the Lodge. As part of my Outcrop work, I do vegetation baseline studies and was involved in the BPRP work as senior scientist on the vegetation work. I lived in Rankin Inlet for 7 years, and met you when you were working as John Todd's constituency assistant in Whale Cove.

After much thought, I have decided to submit a letter to NIRB regarding this project, as I know the area and people very well (through two and a half generations).

None of us that work with Bathurst Inlet Lodge are willing to oppose this project straight out, as we feel that the decision as to support or opposition needs to be made by the people who live in the area year round.

However, I feel that I would personally like draw NIRB's attention to the fact that Bathurst Inlet Lodge has provided regular and reliable employment to anyone from the community who wanted to be employed for 35 consecutive years, and that the community would likely not have continued to exist if it had not been for the Lodge.

The residents of Bathurst Inlet are also co-owners in the Lodge and very much involved in its operation and in all decisions regarding its future. In my opinion, the two major areas of concern include:

1) Loss of tourism potential

In working with Lodge guests over the past three summers (during the time period when there has been much published on the Port & Road Project), it has become apparent that Bathurst Inlet Lodge would not be able to exist if a port is built on the Inlet.

Without ever bringing the subject up with our guests, we have continually received input and opinions from guests from all over the world. This input has been consistent: people wish to visit Bathurst Inlet because they perceive that it is a tiny community in a remote wilderness area with a world-class interpretive program and an opportunity to get to know the local Inuit on a personal basis. They consistently state that they would not be interested should this wilderness feeling be compromised by a port literally within sight of the area of the Inlet in which they travel. It is apparent to me that marketing would become even tougher than it already is.

In addition, many of our guests have travelled extensively throughout the eastern arctic, and state that the Bathurst area is the cleanest they have ever seen, without junk, trash, or old drums washed ashore from barges. It is likely that this would change if the barge traffic increases.

2) Concerns over shipping in the area.

The second major area of concern involves the fact that this project is only partially a “port and road” project. ***By far the most serious concern is the “shipping” aspect of the project*** – use of what seem to be rather risky shipping routes to get fuel to the port and then extensive barge traffic to get fuel to the Kitikmeot communities, some of which are located adjacent to the route that will be used to get the fuel to the port.

As far as I can see, relatively few to no studies (other than using hydrographic information provided by the government) have been done on the environmental effects of this type of shipping in the Northwest Passage and in the channels in Bathurst Inlet. No studies were done on the bird nesting islands in the Inlet, nor on any other wildlife or fisheries concerns other than at the port site.

It is my hope that NIRB would require that sufficient studies be done to assess the impact of this type of shipping (both fuel ships and barge traffic) on the ecology of the Inlet, as well as assessing the socioeconomic effect on the people of the Inlet, and determining if any economic benefits truly would go to the people who live there. I cannot speak to the economic feasibility of the project, but would hope that this is under close scrutiny as well.

In conclusion, it would be sad indeed if construction were started on the road and port infrastructure, without sufficient information on the shipping.

It would be tragic to start construction on the port, affect the environment of the Inlet and the lands the road will cross, and then stop the project due to the fact that the shipping routes will not work.

If you or any other members of your committee wish to discuss this, I would be happy to talk to you. I can be reached at (867) 920-4652 during the day, and at (867) 766-3238 at home. Thank you for listening to me.

Sincerely,

Page Burt
CC: Stephanie Briscoe, Gladys Joudrey