

News Release

Nunavut Opposes Proposed Listing of Polar Bears

IQALUIT, Nunavut (April 12, 2007) – Nunavut Minister of Environment Patterk Netser confirmed today that the Government of Nunavut has submitted a response to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), rebutting its proposal to list polar bears as a threatened species under the *U.S. Endangered Species Act*.

"Polar bears have become a political tool for environmental groups trying to force a change in U.S. climate change policy," said Netser. "We oppose the listing of polar bears because it is currently unwarranted, highly speculative, and will hurt Inuit and our economy."

Nunavummiut and the Government of Nunavut are part of the fight against climate change and are supportive of all efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The target should be climate change, not polar bears.

The Government of Nunavut submission acknowledges that the climate has generally warmed and the sea ice has generally diminished since about 1979 to the present. However, neither science nor Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (Inuit ecological knowledge) supports listing all of the world's populations of polar bears as threatened. Most polar bear populations in Nunavut are abundant, productive, and appear to be sustaining current harvest levels.

"Nunavut has a very effective polar bear management system," said Netser. "We are managing our polar bear populations on a sustainable basis, in a way that provides economic benefits to Nunavummiut."

Minister Netser recently returned from a trip to Washington, D.C. where he spoke directly to the USFWS on the proposed listing.

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