



News Release

Premier Aariak Thanks Pond Inlet for Humane Harvest of Narwhal

IQALUIT, Nunavut (March 23, 2009) – At a community feast featuring muktaaq Friday evening, Nunavut Premier Eva Aariak and Environment Minister Daniel Shewchuk thanked the community of Pond Inlet for harvesting the trapped narwhal during the winter of 2008.

“I am so impressed by the community for applying Inuit Societal Values, conducting such an extensive hunt and for offering meat and muktaaq to all other Nunavut communities,” said Premier Aariak. “Thank you for your hard work, your respect and care for the land, animals and the environment. You will long be remembered and appreciated by Nunavummiut.”

Minister Shewchuk agreed, “I applaud and praise the residents of Pond Inlet for their hard work in harvesting the entrapped narwhals. Although we heard from animal rights groups that there should have been an attempt to free the narwhals, by using Inuit knowledge in harvesting the whales it was far more humane and practical. It would have been a great loss for Nunavummiut had the whales been allowed to die from suffocation.”

“Every family in Pond Inlet now has nutritious food,” said Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Tununiq James Arvaluk. “Pond Inlet deserves this recognition for listening to elders and for working so hard in the cold and dark. This harvest also demonstrated the on-going need for more infrastructure, such as a harbour and meat processing plant.”

Premier Aariak and Minister Shewchuk presented a plaque, on behalf of the Government of Nunavut, to members of the Mittimatalik Hunters and Trappers Association for their role in coordinating the harvest.

Premier Aariak, Minister Shewchuk and Minister Peter Taptuna, with MLA Arvaluk, were in Pond Inlet to kick-start the celebrations for Nunavut’s tenth anniversary. The community shared a feast of traditional foods and a square dance.

The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement was and still is Canada’s largest land claims agreement. On July 9, 1993, the agreement came into force, making it a law of Canada. It created the territory and Government of Nunavut on April 1, 1999.

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Media contact:

Karen Kabloona
Office of Premier Eva Aariak
(867) 975-5059