



News Release

Premier, Minister of Environment Applaud Federal Action against EU Seal Ban

IQALUIT, Nunavut (November 4, 2009) Premier Eva Aariak and Nunavut Minister of Environment Daniel Shewchuk applaud the Government of Canada for taking formal action against the European Union (EU) ban on trade in seal products by requesting WTO consultations. The consultation is the first stage in the WTO settlement process whereby Canada will dispute the EU decision on grounds that it violates several international trade rules.

“I am pleased the Government of Canada is aware of the severe consequences of the EU ban for Nunavummiut and other affected Canadians, and has taken formal action to prevent these consequences from becoming reality,” said Premier Aariak. “Our duty is to continue to inform the EU that the Canadian seal hunt is not only a legitimate and sustainable economic pursuit, but for Inuit, it forms the very fabric of our culture and heritage.”

The Government of Nunavut has been lobbying the Canadian government to take action with the WTO since the ban was announced this spring.

“We must dispel the myths and misinformation of anti-seal hunt lobby groups to defend the interests of Canadian sealers,” said Minister Shewchuk. “The message must be loud and clear: the seal hunt is a sustainable and vital part of our cultural identity, our way of life, and our economic well-being.”

The EU decision allows Inuit to trade seal products for cultural, educational or ceremonial purposes. The Government of Nunavut views this exemption merely as a token gesture which will do nothing to protect Inuit access to markets, nor save Inuit from the overall losses that will be suffered by the industry.

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