



ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ
Building Nunavut Together
Nunavut iuqatigiingniq
Bâtir le Nunavut ensemble

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

GN Welcomes CITES Decision not to Up-list Polar Bear

(March 7, 2013, BANGKOK, Thailand) – The United States’ proposal to ban trade in polar bear parts was defeated at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) meetings in Bangkok, Thailand today.

“This is welcome news,” said Minister of Environment, James Arreak. “It represents a victory for the people of Nunavut, who continue to rely on polar bears as an essential source of subsistence, revenue, and cultural pride.”

The Government of Nunavut (GN) is cautiously optimistic with this decision, as another proposal could be introduced before the CITES meeting in Bangkok concludes next week.

The Canadian delegation is made up of representatives from the GN, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI), Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWOs), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), and Environment Canada.

During the past several months, the GN has worked tirelessly with the federal government and other co-management partners to lobby CITES parties, and inform international audiences of the effectiveness of our sustainable management system and the futility of the United States’ proposal. In addition to sending letters to all of the other 176 CITES nations, GN representatives traveled to the U.S.A., France, and Belgium to explain that polar bears do not meet the necessary criteria to be considered an Appendix I species under CITES.

“The United States’ proposal was a misguided attempt to place undue trade restrictions on a species that is not threatened by trade or hunting. Thanks in large part to Nunavut’s wildlife co-management system, polar bear numbers in Canada have increased dramatically since the 1970’s,” said Arreak. “This represents the second time we have stood firmly against a proposed up-listing that would only serve to hurt Nunavummiut, and do nothing to conserve polar bears.”

Had the proposal been accepted, it would have had serious negative consequences for Nunavummiut, especially harvesters and outfitters. The GN repeatedly communicated the importance of the sustainable polar bear harvest to Inuit cultural identity and economic well-being.

.../2

