

**LETTER OF INTENT ON COOPERATION FOR THE PIKIALASORSUAQ BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND OCEANS OF CANADA AND THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, SELF-SUFFICIENCY, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GREENLAND**

**THE DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND OCEANS OF CANADA AND THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, SELF-SUFFICIENCY, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GREENLAND**, hereinafter referred to as “the Participants”,

**NOTING** that the Pikialasorsuaq, or North Water Polynya, is a dynamic area of open sea that remains ice-free throughout the winter, located between Canada and Greenland, confined by coastal landfast sea ice along Ellesmere Island and Greenland, extending north into Kane Basin, and south into Jones Sound, typically spanning from the east coast of Devon Island to Cape York;

**NOTING** that the Pikialasorsuaq, meaning the “great up-welling” in Kalaallisut (Greenlandic) is also known as the Sarvarjuaq, meaning “place that never freezes”, in Nunavut, Canada;

**RECOGNIZING** that the Pikialasorsuaq is one of the most biologically productive areas in the Arctic and is of international importance to ecosystems and biodiversity throughout the Arctic;

**ACKNOWLEDGING** the importance of the Pikialasorsuaq to Inuit and local communities for harvest of living resources now and in the future, relying on the region and ecosystem for movement, food, and resources for tools and clothing;

**RECOGNIZING** that for millennia, Inuit have regarded the Pikialasorsuaq as a place of great cultural, spiritual, and historic significance and that the ecological and cultural footprint of the Pikialasorsuaq is much larger than the physical bounds of the polynya, often viewed as a region of cultural continuity, ignoring international borders, and connecting people and resources;

**RECOGNIZING** issues and concerns raised by the Participants, Inuit organizations, including the Inuit Circumpolar Council and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, through the Pikialasorsuaq Commission report concluded in 2017, and by the Kalaallit Nunaanni Aalisartut Piniartullu Kattuffiat (The Fishermen and Hunters Association in Greenland);

**RECOGNIZING** scientific findings on the nature of the Pikialasorsuaq through the work concluded in 2017 by the Danish Centre for Environment and Energy and the work concluded in 2021 by the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat;

**RECOGNIZING** the Pikialasorsuaq Leaders’ Statement issued by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Inuit Nunangat leaders in March 2019;

**ACKNOWLEDGING** collaboration within the Arctic Council on guidelines and tools for advancing ecosystem-based management, Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures, and for the development of a network of Marine Protected Areas in the circumpolar context;

**HAVING REGARD** to the *Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Government of Nunavut and the Government of Greenland*, signed in Nuuk, on 24 October 2000;

**HAVING REGARD** to the *Agreement between the Government of Canada on the one hand and the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark together with the Government of Greenland on the other hand on the maritime and land boundaries in the area between Greenland and Canada*, done at Ottawa on 14 June 2022;

**HAVING REGARD** to existing single-species bilateral management instruments between the Participants such as *Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Narwhal and Beluga in Baffin Bay*, signed on 7 December 1989, and the *Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation and Management of Polar Bear Populations in Kane Basin and Baffin Bay*, signed on 11 November 2009, as well as other single-species management and arrangements.

**HAVING REGARD** to *Act no. 473 of 12 June 2009 on Greenland Self-Government*, and noting that, while this Letter of Intent does not constitute an agreement at international law, the Ministry of Agriculture, Self-Sufficiency, Energy and Environment of the Government of Greenland is signing in accordance with Greenland's competencies as reflected in Chapter 4 of the Act;

**DETERMINED** to work towards common objectives and coordinate in the development of future management measures for the area based on their respective national law, in accordance with the Participants' areas of competence and taking into account existing bilateral arrangements between the Participants and other relevant international obligations for the Participants of importance for the management of the area;

**HAVE REACHED** the following understanding:

## **1. OBJECTIVE**

The Participants will:

- (a) establish a joint Pikialasorsuaq steering committee to develop instruments and common foundations for management of the area;
- (b) share relevant existing scientific information, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in Canada, as well as hunter and user knowledge in Greenland from relevant government-based institutions

and other sources, and cooperate and coordinate on research and monitoring of key ecosystem parameters relevant to the area;

- (c) share information from consultations with local representatives of relevance to the area; and
- (d) refer questions that fall wholly or partially outside of their areas of competence or outside the terms of this Letter of Intent for separate discussion with relevant authorities.

## **2. STATUS**

This Letter of Intent is not legally binding.

## **3. FINAL DISPOSITIONS**

- (a) This Letter of Intent will take effect on the date of its last signature by the Participants.
- (b) The Participants may, in accordance with their areas of competence, amend this Letter of Intent by their mutual written consent.
- (c) Either Participant may terminate this Letter of Intent by giving a 60-day written notice to the other Participant.

**SIGNED** in duplicate in the English, French, Greenlandic and Danish languages, each version being equally valid.

**FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND  
OCEANS OF CANADA**

**FOR THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,  
SELF-SUFFICIENCY, ENERGY AND  
ENVIRONMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF  
GREENLAND**

City: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Diane Lebouthillier  
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the  
Canadian Coast Guard

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kalistat Lund  
Minister for Agriculture, Self-Sufficiency,  
Energy and Environment

