

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NUNATUKAVUT COMMUNITY COUNCIL RAISING CONCERNS ABOUT CANADA'S LATEST DEALS ON FISHERIES AND PARKS

HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY, LABRADOR, August 19, 2021 – The NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) today issued the following statement in response to Canada's recent announcement about Incremental Treaty Agreements (ITAs) reached with Innu Nation:

“The two agreements that Canada reached with the Innu Nation related to fisheries and the Akami-Uapishk^U-KakKasuak-Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve raises deep concerns about the potential impacts on NCC and NunatuKavut Inuit. NunatuKavut Inuit were not appropriately consulted on the fisheries ITA and the issues NCC has raised with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans have not been addressed. In terms of the Parks Canada agreement, there has been a profound lack of transparency. A deal was reached between Canada and the Innu Nation just days before the announcement. NCC was not consulted on the agreement and, to date, Canada has been unwilling to share a copy of the agreement following multiple requests.

From the limited knowledge made available to us on the fisheries ITA, it potentially has a significant impact on the rights of NunatuKavut Inuit. We are the direct descendants of Inuit who occupied coastal Labrador prior to European contact. Our people continue to live in the same places as our ancestors and we carry on our traditional ways of life on our traditional lands and waters. The literature, historical records, oral histories and the evidence clearly and emphatically demonstrates that Inuit have always occupied and used the lands and waters in NunatuKavut, dating back to pre-contact. Inuit ways of knowing and being were then, and continue to be integral to navigating the lands, waters and ice in our traditional homeland. NunatuKavut Inuit are the primary coastal Indigenous peoples of this area and this ITA must fully accommodate the primacy of our rights and interests.

The Parks Canada deal is also greatly concerning. The Akami-Uapishk^U-KakKasuak-Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve is situated within the traditional homeland of NunatuKavut Inuit. NCC has a Shared Understanding Agreement (SUA) with Parks Canada that recognizes our people's continued connection to these lands for centuries. This includes the area of the Wonderstrands, which is of huge cultural, historical and spiritual significance to many NunatuKavut Inuit today. The SUA sets out a consultation process to be followed with NCC relating to matters that impact our rights within the Park, as well as various other processes by which NCC is to participate in Parks planning and management. We are appalled that there has been such an incredible lack of consideration given to our rights around the agreement with the Innu Nation. The lack of transparency is unacceptable and NCC needs to receive a copy of the agreement immediately to fully understand its impacts.

In just a couple of days, on August 21, we will gather in Chateau Bay to celebrate and commemorate the British-Inuit of Treaty of 1765. This Treaty recognized and affirmed our presence and connection to our coastal lands and waters. We remain deeply connected to these very same places and we continue to depend on the same marine environment and resources as our ancestors. A commitment to reconciliation demands the full recognition and respect of our people's rights to our lands, waters and resources. Canada can and must do better."

To learn more about NCC and NunatuKavut Inuit, please visit our website at www.nunatukavut.ca and we invite you to check out our new Story Map page. Please also join in the conversation at facebook.com/nunatuKavut and Twitter [@nunatuKavut](https://twitter.com/nunatuKavut).

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