



STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NunatuKavut Community Council condemns Senate Committee amendments to Bill S-14 that breaches Shared Understanding Agreement (SUA) on the Akami-Uapishk^u-KakKasuak-Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve

HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY, LABRADOR, December 7, 2023 – NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) President Todd Russell issued the following statement today:

“NCC is appalled by the recent Senate committee amendments to Bill S-14, *An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act, the Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act, the Rouge National Urban Park Act and the National Parks of Canada Fishing Regulations*. The amendment to exclude NCC members as traditional land users completely disrespects the historical connection that NunatuKavut Inuit have to the lands, ice and waters within the Akami-Uapishk^u-KakKasuak-Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve. It also clearly breaches our Shared Understanding Agreement (SUA) with Parks Canada.

The Park is situated within the traditional homeland of NunatuKavut Inuit. Inuit traditional knowledge and land use studies show extensive hunting, harvesting and trapping activities in the Park by NunatuKavut members and there are those that still live in and around the Park Reserve. Our people know their ancestral lands well and are determined to defend their lands and their families and communities.

NCC has played a central role in the creation of the Park and the SUA was reached after years of engagement and dialogue with Parks Canada. The SUA recognizes our longstanding connection to the Park and acknowledges that we assert Inuit rights in the area. It also allows for our people to carry on traditional activities. Removing our people from the Bill not only disregards our connection to the Park but severely breaches Canada’s obligations under the SUA and infringes on our Treaty rights.

A reversal of this commitment, through the amendments made to Bill S-14, is unfathomable and detrimental to the health and well-being of NunatuKavut Inuit in and around the Park. We cannot, and will not, accept exclusionary policies and politically motivated attempts to displace us on our own lands.

NCC also expects future proceedings on this bill to follow parliamentary decorum, ensuring balance and fairness is upheld. We are disheartened to see the way today’s committee was carried out and the disregard for process. Decisions about our land should not be left in the hands of those who do not have knowledge and understanding of NunatuKavut Inuit history, culture and attachment.

Some members of the Senate committee appear to have been influenced by defamatory and outright false statements made by the Innu Nation and the Nunatsiavut Government and are now playing politics with the rights of our people. We urgently call on the Senate of Canada to respect the rights of the NunatuKavut Inuit and reverse the committee’s amendment to remove NCC members as a traditional land user from Bill S-14.”

About: The NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) is a governing organization that represents the rights and interests of Inuit who come from south and central Labrador. NCC is committed to advocating for section 35 rights, interests, and priorities of NunatuKavut Inuit. Rooted in the rich traditions and culture of NunatuKavut Inuit, NCC works diligently towards self-government and self-determination, while fostering community growth and sustainability.

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 which helps tell our story. Please also join in the conversation at [facebook.com/nunatukavut](https://www.facebook.com/nunatukavut) and X/Twitter [@nunatukavut](https://twitter.com/nunatukavut).

To read previous statements on this matter, please check out the News & Media section of our website at <https://nunatukavut.ca/news-media/latest-news/>

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