



News Release



Minister Offers Senator First-Hand Glimpse of Nunavut Seal Harvest

IQALUIT, Nunavut (February 8, 2010) - Nunavut Minister of Environment Daniel Shewchuk will meet with Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette in Iqaluit tomorrow to discuss the Nunavut seal harvest. During her visit to Iqaluit, the Senator will also travel by ski-doo to the floe edge some 40 kilometers out of town to take part in a seal hunt. Here she hopes to witness first-hand the traditional and modern-day practice that has been central to Inuit cultural identity and well-being for generations.

“We are pleased to meet with Senator Hervieux-Payette here in Nunavut, and are grateful for her support and interest in working with us” said Shewchuk. “We need to tell the world the real story of sealing in Nunavut and to dispel the myth and misinformation that prevails. Allies like Senator Hervieux-Payette are helping us do just that”.

Senator Hervieux-Payette led the development of the Universal Declaration on the Ethical Harvest of Seals. Written by a team of seven experts and scientists from six Canadian provinces and territories and the United States, the Universal Declaration will be a starting point for new discussions between North Americans and Europeans on the topic of marine mammal welfare, including the seal. The Declaration aims to establish common ethical principles for all seal-hunting countries by promoting a three-way balance between ensuring animal welfare, ensuring the well being of human communities and protecting species and ecosystems.

The Universal Declaration will be on the meeting agenda, and the Senator hopes to gain Nunavut’s official support. “There is a need to create dialogue within the international community and to develop shared ethical standards for the seal hunt” said Senator Hervieux-Payette. “I hope that Nunavut’s voice will be heard loud and clear as part of this process. I look forward to gaining greater insight into this important tradition and industry, which remains a vital part of the Inuit way of life in Nunavut”.

The recent European Union seal ban has had a significant negative impact on the market for Nunavut sealskins. The ban was a direct result of pressures placed on EU Parliamentarians by animal rights lobby groups. The Nunavut Department of Environment will continue its fur harvester subsidy program to minimize negative impacts to Nunavut harvesters.

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