

Colville Closing Comments

Presented January 23, 2020

We have submitted a plan that we want approved and implemented. We've heard nothing but support for our plan. We are looking for a board decision to approve it. We are looking for GNWT support for implementation.

We have also prepared and presented our draft law. Dene people know that it is a good law. It comes from our traditions and what we've all been taught. But we also heard questions were from government and the board about how our law can be implemented and how it can be enforced. Those are not questions that Colville can answer on our own. We would like to be able to say that "it is our law and we will enforce it" but we recognize that we are caught up in government systems that don't recognize our laws, and that we need support and recognition from other Sahtu communities. We also recognize we don't have the resources to do this work ourselves.

Those are not new issues. Those questions were asked during the Deline hearing in 2016. We asked some of those questions ourselves. But we think the Board made some good recommendations in 2016 that need to be implemented.

We want the Board to listen carefully to what was said here this week, and to provide directions to the RRCs and to the GNWT about the process that should be followed to get answers to those questions.

And last but not least, we want the Board to be very clear on whether or not there is a TAH in place in the Sahtu Region. ENR says you sent them a hearing report in 2007 approving a 4% TAH and they haven't received any clear decisions from you since. But we read your 2016 hearing report and your July 2019 correspondence to ENR, in which you say:

"The SRRB welcomes the opportunity to clarify that the SRRB does not accept the use of the TAH and related tag system, since this is contradictory to the current evidence that community conservation plans provide the best conservation outcomes."

The Board needs to be clear there is not a TAH in the Sahtu, and that harvest regulation will happen in accordance with community conservation plans and community authorizations.

Finally, it is also time for ENR to be very clear on whether they will continue to require tags. We think they are legacies of colonial conservation. We think they are harmful to the relationships we are trying to build. We know there is a better way.

Everyone here wants the best for the caribou. Everyone here is a responsible resource manager. We all understand the need for information sharing. We have better tools that we can use as responsible parties to make good decisions together.

Let's use them.