



Government Leader

NOV 16 1990

Mr. Peter Ernerk
MLA, Alvilik
P.O. Box 182
Rankin Inlet, N.W.T.
X0C 0G0

Dear Mr. Ernerk:

In response to your question asked in the Legislative Assembly on October 30, 1990, with regard to the federally imposed quota on beluga whales, it is our understanding that recent court decisions on aboriginal rights do not limit the federal government's power of imposing quotas for reasons necessary to the conservation of a species.

Regardless, if a court challenge is contemplated, we are of the opinion that it would be more appropriate in these circumstances for the group which is affected to initiate the action.

Through the Department of Justice there is an Aboriginal Rights Court Challenges Program to which an interested group could apply. The program provides funding to the maximum of \$35,000 to pay legal expenses for individuals and non-profit organizations who seek to define and protect aboriginal, treaty, or other rights that pertain to the aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories. Applications are submitted for consideration to the Minister's Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Justice and the Minister of Justice may approve payments upon the recommendation of the Committee.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dennis Patterson".

Dennis Patterson

cc: Kevin O'Keefe
David Hamilton

