

FOR RELEASE  
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## **Government of Yukon, Vuntut Gwitchin Government and Gwich'in Tribal Council urge protection of Porcupine caribou herd**

Yukon Premier Sandy Silver, Vuntut Gwitchin Deputy Chief Esau Schafer and Gwich'in Tribal Council President Bobbi-Jo Greenland Morgan are urging the protection of the Porcupine caribou herd and their calving grounds. Opening the Alaskan coastal plain to commercial development will have a severely detrimental impact on the herd.

The Gwich'in Peoples have long sought the protection of the Porcupine caribou herd and their calving grounds, which are widely acknowledged from both scientific and Traditional Knowledge perspectives, to be the most sensitive habitat for migratory barren-ground caribou herds.

Officials from both governments are travelling to Washington on November 6 to advocate for the protection of the Porcupine caribou herd, following a letter sent by the Government of Yukon to US Senator for Alaska Lisa Murkowski and US Senator for Washington Maria Cantwell on November 1.

The Porcupine caribou herd is one of the largest populations of barren ground caribou in North America– a species that is identified by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada.

### **Quotes**

"The Government of Yukon stands in solidarity with the Gwich'in Peoples, advocating for the protection of the Porcupine caribou herd's sacred and sensitive calving grounds on the Alaskan coastal plain. We are committed to this cause and encourage Yukoners to add their voices to this important effort."

*–Yukon Premier Sandy Silver*

"The Yukon government has illustrated its commitment not only to the caribou but to the Gwich'in Nation. We are pleased with our meetings with the Yukon government and Gwich'in Tribal Council and are confident that we are in a stronger place moving forward together with one unified vision and strategy."

*–Vuntut Gwitchin Deputy Chief Esau Schafer*

'We are grateful for the support we receive from the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Government of Yukon and both of our Federal Members of Parliament. Together we stand for future generations, Indigenous rights, human rights and wellbeing. We as leaders have a responsibility to leave a healthy land and wildlife for our children and generations to come. No one has the right to risk our children's inherent rights to access and enjoy a pristine environment and healthy caribou herd that sustains Gwichin culture. We will not rest until we see this sacred area receive permanent wilderness protection'.

*–Gwich'in Tribal Council President Bobbi-Jo Greenland Morgan*

### **Quick facts**

- The Porcupine caribou herd is currently estimated to be 197,000.
- The passing of the budget resolution in the US Congress on October 26 is a step closer to legislation that would open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling.
- The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is on the Alaska coastal plain.
- Along the Alaskan border, existing agreements between Indigenous Peoples, the Government of Yukon and the Government of Canada protect nearly 8,000 square miles of the Porcupine Caribou herd's range.

### **Contact:**

Sunny Patch  
Government of Yukon, Cabinet Communications  
867-393-7478  
sunny.patch@gov.yk.ca

Rebecca Shrubbs  
Executive Specialist, Communications and Policy, Vuntut Gwitchin Government  
867-966-3261, extension 258  
rshrubbs@vgfn.net

Tony Devlin  
Director of Communications, Gwich'in Tribal Council  
867-777-7923  
TDevlin@gwichin.nt.ca

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