



FOR RELEASE  
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## **A statement by Minister of Environment Currie Dixon on Ross River Dena Council's Statement of Claim**

WHITEHORSE—On July 31, 2014, Ross River Dena Council filed a Statement of Claim seeking a declaration that Yukon government has a duty to consult, and where indicated, accommodate Ross River Dena Council prior to issuing hunting licences and seals (also known as tags) under the *Wildlife Act* for big game animals in a portion of the First Nation's Traditional Territory surrounding Ross River and Faro.

The Yukon government is surprised and deeply concerned with this recent statement of claim.

As Minister of Environment I would like to reassure hunters that this claim does not appear to affect this year's hunting season. Licences and seals that have been issued remain valid and legitimate and Yukon's current hunting laws and regulations remain in effect and unchanged.

That said, Yukon hunters should be very concerned about the implications of this claim. Any resident, non-resident or First Nation hunter could be affected, and should be aware of this Claim.

In Yukon we undertake wildlife inventories and monitor wildlife populations as closely as possible. First Nations often participate in this work and information is regularly shared with them. We have processes in place, including direct engagement with First Nations, to address limitations on harvesting and develop necessary regulation for wildlife harvest in response to conservation concerns or other wildlife interests. This cooperative and collaborative approach to wildlife management, along with the absence of any warning or prior notice from the Ross River Dena Council makes this statement of Claim all the more surprising and concerning.

Many Yukoners hunt and hunting is an integral part of the lifestyle that Yukoners hold dear. Despite the unfortunate and disruptive timing of the filing of this Claim (the day before the commencement of hunting season) we will endeavour to ensure there is no immediate impact on resident, non-resident and First Nation hunters.

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Contact:

Elaine Schiman  
Cabinet Communications  
867-633-7961  
elaine.schiman@gov.yk.ca

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