

(Nain, NL) March 14, 2006 – The Nunatsiavut Government’s Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, William Barbour, expresses his strong support for the Fur Institute of Canada’s event “Up the Anti” happening in Ottawa this week.

Inuit in Northern Labrador have a long standing tradition of involvement in the seal industry for subsistence and economic benefits. The Nunatsiavut Government supports the humane, sustainable domestic and commercial seal harvest and commends the Fur Institute of Canada on its efforts to bring to light the reality of the seal industry in Canada.

William Barbour, Nunatsiavut Government’s Minister of Lands and Resources says, “As Inuit, sealing has always been an important part of our cultural tradition and our livelihood. It is now also an integral part of our commercial and economic prosperity. It is time the rest of the world was provided with an accurate account of both the subsistence harvest and the commercial sealing industry.”

Inuit in Nunatsiavut hunt the seal for subsistence purposes using basic Inuit hunting principles. Hunters only kill what they need and every possible part of the animal is used for food, crafts, skin boots, etc.

The commercial harvest of seals began in the 1940’s and continues to present day. Currently, Inuit in Northern Labrador participate annually in a successful, competitive commercial seal fishery that they take pride in. With three sixty-five foot vessels, the Nunatsiavut Government employs fifteen Inuit hunters and ten professional seal harvesters in the area have their own vessels which employ local harvesters as well. The hunt is an integral part of economic prosperity in Northern Labrador.

The seal harvest is highly monitored and hunters abide by strict regulations set out by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Any violations of Canada's regulations are taken very seriously by the Government of Canada. Canada's Royal Commission on Seals & Sealing has found that the methods currently used in hunting seals compare favourably to those used to kill any other wild or domestic animal.

Minister Barbour says “The banning of seal products by any country has a devastating effect on the income that we derive from the seal. Without the commercial seal hunt, many of our fisherman would not be able to make a living and would lose the important connection we have to the seal. The hunt is a valuable link to our cultural heritage as Inuit.”

On behalf of the Nunatsiavut Government, Minister Barbour fully supports and encourages participation in the Fur Institute of Canada’s event “Up the Anti” and would like to express his regret for being unable to attend.

Nunatsiavut Government represents approximately 5,300 Inuit and Kablunângajuit of Labrador, and is responsible for advancing the aboriginal, constitutional, democratic, social and human rights of Labrador Inuit. For more information on Nunatsiavut Government, visit www.nunatsiavut.com. **Contact:** Karen Prentice, Director of Communications, Tel: 709-922-2942 or kprentice@nunatsiavut.com