

# Benefits and threats to food security and Arctic life: seeking a ban on heavy fuel oil



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ARCTIC VOICES

Indigenous leaders are highlighting heavy fuel oil (HFO) and the potential impacts to food security, culture, and ways of life for communities in a changing Arctic.

## 1 Arctic Life

Arctic communities' way of life is intrinsically linked to the environment. For millennia, this close association to the natural environment has built and preserved:

A rich cultural heritage of ancestral traditions such as the right to **access the land and the sea**, which in turn provides communities with food security and a nutritious local diet.



A way of life in **harmony with an environment rich in wildlife** driven by the seasons.



“The Oceans are the life force and source of life for us as Inuit of the Arctic.”

Sheila Watt-Cloutier - Environmental, Cultural and Human Rights Advocate

“...food security is very important for those living in our communities.”

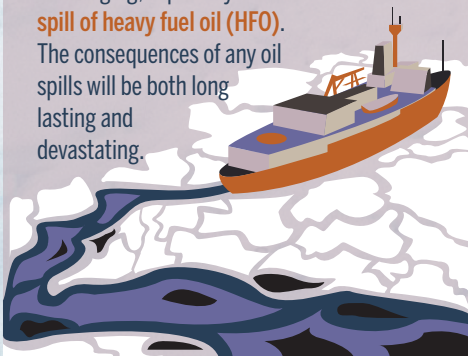
Lisa Koperqualuk - Inuit Circumpolar Council, ICC Canada



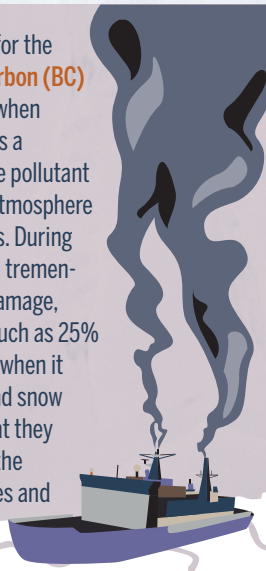
## 2 The threats

With changing climate come physical changes to the environment that both humans and wildlife rely on to thrive. The Arctic is experiencing an increase in environmental threats:

With increased shipping comes increased risks, including the potential for oil spills. In snow and ice the response to a spill is challenging, especially for a **spill of heavy fuel oil (HFO)**. The consequences of any oil spills will be both long lasting and devastating.



A less visible risk for the Arctic is **Black Carbon (BC)** emitted by ships when burning HFO. BC is a short-lived climate pollutant that stays in the atmosphere only days to weeks. During that time it does a tremendous amount of damage, contributing as much as 25% of Arctic warming when it settles onto ice and snow increasing the heat they absorb, affecting the Arctic communities and environment.



The loss of access to natural resources has direct economic consequences, with communities having to import food stuff at high costs (and increasing shipping in the region). It also represents a **loss of food security and way of life**.



“Black carbon is a short-lived climate pollutant that stays in the atmosphere only days to weeks.... it does a tremendous amount of damage when it settles onto ice and snow.”

Mellisa Heflin - Bering Sea Elders Group





### 3 The solutions

There are ways to remove these threats. To reduce the risks of a HFO spill and the impacts of climate change for those who rely on ice for their Indigenous way of life, then banning HFO and rapidly lowering the emissions of BC by the shipping industry will provide the best route to near-term reductions in warming, particularly in the Arctic.

The only way to accomplish this is by banning HFO and immediately switching to distillate or alternative, cleaner fuels for ships.



“...the threats are varied, but the use and carriage of heavy fuel oil by Arctic shipping is one that can be addressed quickly.” Verner Wilson III – Friends of the Earth, US

“We believe that the melding and incorporation of Indigenous knowledge provides for the best available science...” Austin Ahmasuk – Kaverak Inc.

### 4 Call to Action

Arctic people are mobilising to have their voices heard.

Arctic Indigenous leaders have travelled long distances to attend and speak up at important IMO meetings making decisions that will impact their future.



Arctic Indigenous organisations have passed resolutions to support Indigenous consultative status at the IMO, and to support a phase-out of HFO use and carriage as fuel in Arctic shipping.



Remove the HFO threat from Arctic people's lives, by ensuring the ban on HFO use and carriage in Arctic shipping is adopted without further delay.



“In the international arenas, ..., the language of economics and technology is always calling for more delays ... do not play this card when it comes to banning heavy fuel oil...”

Sheila Watt-Cloutier - Environmental, Cultural and Human Rights Advocate

#### Arctic indigenous people resolutions:

Mar 2017	Curyung Tribal Council in Dillingham, Alaska, passed a resolution supporting formal Indigenous participation at IMO, citing risk of oil spills as a primary reason.
Apr 2017	Kaverak, Inc., the regional non-profit corporation for the Bering Straits region, passed a resolution supporting formal Indigenous participation at IMO, citing risk of oil spills as a primary reason.
July 2018	The Inuit Circumpolar Council, representing Inuit in Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka declared support for participation at IMO and calls for a phase out of HFO to minimize impacts.
Sep 2018	Bristol Bay Native Association passed a resolution supporting the phase out of HFO in Arctic shipping. They submitted the resolution to the Alaska Federation of Natives for consideration at their annual convention.
Oct 2018	The Alaska Federation of Natives passed the resolution submitted by Bristol Bay Native Association supporting the phase out of HFO in Arctic shipping.
Oct 2018	Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) passed a resolution calling on Canada to ban the use, carriage, and transportation of HFO in Arctic waters. NTI board members include representatives from the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Kivalliq Inuit Association and Qikiqtani Inuit Association.
Oct 2018	The Native Village of Savoonga, Alaska passed a resolution supporting formal Indigenous participation at IMO, citing issues related to HFO and potential accidental oil spills as one of the primary reasons.
Mar 2019	The Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC) passed a resolution to support the ban on HFO in the Arctic. The IGC includes representatives from Hunters and Trappers Committee (HTC) in each of the six Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) communities, which are Aklavik, Inuvik, Ulukhaktok, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour and Tuktoyaktuk.