

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Harper needs to “listen up” on ways to protect the Arctic: NDP
*Parliament must have a debate, says NDP Northern Development critic***

OTTAWA – NDP Northern Development critic Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic) announced today that a package aimed at addressing Arctic sovereignty is being crafted by the NDP from ideas coming from Northerners, rather than imposing an out of touch solution as Harper did.

“Last month, NDP Leader Jack Layton, NDP Aboriginal Affairs critic Jean Crowder and I traveled across the Arctic meeting with leaders and average Northerners who told us how Canada should be protecting their land,” said Bevington. “We listened to what the people of the North thought are the best ways to protect the Arctic and now we are developing ways to bring those ideas to reality.”

“Harper believes protecting the Arctic means a military build-up, but there are threats to the Arctic beyond this one sided view,” said Bevington. “Climate change is a threat to the Arctic, uncontrolled industrial development is a threat to the Arctic, the continued prosperity gap including the lack of affordable housing, insufficient infrastructure, the high cost of living and inadequate health care are threats to the Arctic, which means we need to take a multi-faceted approach to protecting the North.”

“It’s time for Harper to listen up,” said Bevington. “And since he’s shown he’s not listening to average Northerners and Canadians on ways to protect the Arctic, I am calling for a debate on this issue when the House returns.”

Based on the findings from the NDP leader’s recent tour of the Arctic, the NDP will be announcing over the upcoming weeks a series of policy initiatives to protect the Arctic. This package of policy initiatives will address the need to protect the Arctic in a manner that takes a holistic approach and benefits the needs of all Northerners.

- 30 -

For more information, please contact:

Doug Johnson, Office of Dennis Bevington, MP: 613-992-2131 or bevind0@parl.gc.ca