

**Government of the Northwest Territories Response to  
Committee Report 7-16(5)  
Report on Bill 16: An Act to Amend the Dog Act**

**BACKGROUND**

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure (SCEDI) presented their Committee Report "Report on Bill 16: *An Act to Amend the Dog Act*" on March 1, 2011. This report contains three recommendations for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) which address access to veterinary services (recommendation one), assistance to community governments (recommendation two), and public education (recommendation three).

On March 3, 2011, CR 7-16(5) was considered in Committee of the Whole. Two additional recommendations, not contained in the report, were also carried. These include a recommendation that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to the report within 120 days (recommendation four), and to immediately begin development of comprehensive animal protection legislation for introduction early in the life of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly (recommendation five).

**RECOMMENDATION 1**

The Committee recommends that the Department of MACA initiate discussions with stakeholders and veterinary colleges to explore options for expanding access to veterinary services, and in particular spay and neuter programs, throughout the Northwest Territories, and where necessary, facilitate the implementation of such options.

*Departmental Response:* Amongst other activities, MACA's primary focus is community governments and providing community governments with the funding and legislative framework within which they operate. MACA does not have the authority or the mandate to look after the health of dogs or other animals and as a result, is unable to act on the Committee's recommendation.

**RECOMMENDATION 2**

The Committee recommends that the Department of MACA consult with community governments prior to the coming into force of the *Act* to ensure they have adequate resources, including staff training, to implement the *Act*.

Departmental Response: Information packages, including a “Question and Answer” sheet, were sent to all community governments in April 2011. As noted in the correspondence sent to community governments, there is expected to be little to no impact on a community government’s financial resources. MACA will continue to work with, and support community governments to implement territorial legislation as required.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

The Committee recommends that the Department of MACA initiate discussions with stakeholders on the development and delivery of a public education program on dogs, and, if and as appropriate, assist with the development and delivery of such a program.

Departmental Response: As noted in the departmental response to Recommendation 1, MACA does not have the authority or the mandate to look after the health of dogs or other animals.

### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

The Committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this report within 120 days.

Departmental Response:

The Government of the Northwest Territories is responsive to this recommendation by tabling this comprehensive response during the 6<sup>th</sup> Session of the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

### **Recommendation 5**

The Committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories immediately begins developing comprehensive animal protection legislation for introduction early in the life of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

Departmental Response:

The Government of the Northwest Territories will assess the implementation of amendments to the *Dog Act* over a period of time to determine its effectiveness in reducing the number of dogs that are suffering abuse. This will help determine if broader animal protection legislation is necessary. If so, a decision will be made at that time as to which department will sponsor comprehensive animal protection legislation.

Should the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly determine that broader animal welfare legislation is a priority then work to develop this legislation could take place at that time.