

## **Holding the Government accountable is key for the Standing Committee on Government Operations**

(YELLOWKNIFE) April 28, 2016 - Effective oversight is the top priority for the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Government Operations to hold the Government accountable and empower the people of the Northwest Territories.

The Standing Committee met last week in Fort Providence, at a meeting hosted by Deh Cho MLA Michael M. Nadli, to discuss its strategic priorities over the term of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

"Northerners want to know that they're being heard and are a part of the Government's decision-making process. We intend to pull back the curtain to reveal what is going on. We will use our oversight role to ensure that NWT residents get the information they need to access effective and efficient government services," said Committee Chair Kieron Testart.

The Committee's ongoing mandate includes oversight of the Departments of Executive, Finance, Human Resources, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations and Municipal and Community Affairs. It is also mandated to review the Auditor General of Canada's reports, official languages matters, the NWT Public Accounts, and the reports of the Legislative Assembly's Statutory Offices including the Human Rights Commission, Information and Privacy Commissioner and Official Languages Commissioner.

"In assessing the GNWT's performance in all areas of the Committee's mandate, we'll apply a lens that focuses on accountability, transparency and efficiency, along with public engagement and clear, understandable communication from Government," added Deputy Chair RJ Simpson. "The bottom line is making sure that the Government is working for the NWT residents it serves."

The Standing Committee also identified the following priorities:

- Continuing to support the development of an Ombudsman's Office; and,
- Creating a joint Committee of the Cabinet Minister and Regular Members to advance land, resource and self-government agreements and enhance relationships with Aboriginal governments, as proposed in the GNWT's Mandate.

The Standing Committee completed its public review of the *Public Accounts for 2014-2015* at a meeting in Yellowknife on April 14, 2016, which included staff from the Office of the Auditor General of Canada and the Department of Finance's Office of the Comptroller General. The Standing Committee will table its report on this review when the Legislative Assembly reconvenes on May 31, 2016.

While in Fort Providence, Standing Committee members met with representatives from the interagency committee and Lois Philipp, Principal, Deh Gáh Elementary and Secondary School.

Membership on the Standing Committee on Government Operations includes Kieron Testart (Kam Lake), R.J. Simpson (Hay River North), Daniel McNeely (Sahtu), Michael M. Nadli (Deh Cho) and Herbert Nakimayak (Nunakput). Committee alternate Members include Julie Green (Yellowknife Centre), Kevin O'Reilly (Frame Lake) and Cory Vanthuyne (Yellowknife North).

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