

Top Priorities identified by the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment

(Yellowknife) April 28, 2016 – Economic diversification through strategic development of renewable and non-renewable resources, infrastructure and climate change are the top priorities of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment in the 18th Assembly.

Standing Committee members met in Hay River last week, at a meeting hosted by Hay River North MLA R.J. Simpson, to discuss the Committee’s priorities and strategic direction.

“Identifying our top priorities allows the Committee to focus on issues of greatest importance to Northerners as we work with the Government to fulfill the mandate agreed upon by all Members of this Assembly,” said Deputy Chair Cory Vanthuyne.

The Committee set priorities under the key themes within its own mandate, which emphasizes infrastructure, renewable and non-renewable resource development, energy and climate change, and environmental management. The Members also met with K’atl’odeeche First Nation leadership and representatives of NWT’s agriculture, manufacturing, fishery and biomass industries who brought further insights and perspectives to the Committee’s discussions.

During the life of the 18th Assembly, the Committee wants to advance publicly responsible land and resource management practices; refocus support for mining and oil and gas development to ensure transparency and accountability; prioritize investment in energy and transportation infrastructure; encourage Northern business through smart, targeted policies and practices; and revitalize and expand economic diversification initiatives to maximize opportunities in the green energy, agriculture, creative, traditional and tourism sectors.

The NWT’s response to climate change was a prominent discussion topic as Members anticipate the development of a new Climate Change Strategy for the Territory, and the renewal of NWT’s Energy Plan and the NWT Greenhouse Gas Strategy.

“Hay River is a hub for economic development in terms of its history, location and infrastructure, making it an ideal location for the Standing Committee’s strategic planning,” said Deputy Chair Cory Vanthuyne at the conclusion of the meeting. “The Committee thanks the people who helped make our meetings in Hay River a success and looks forward to advancing the priorities and commitments within its mandate.” Committee Members include Herbert Nakimayak (Nunakput), Cory Vanthuyne (Yellowknife North), Daniel McNeely (Sahtu), Kevin O’Reilly (Frame Lake), R.J. Simpson (Hay River North) and Kieron Testart (Kam Lake).

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