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**The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.**  
(Mackenzie Delta)

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(Inuvik Boot Lake)  
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*Minister of Infrastructure*  
*Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation*

**Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge**  
(Deh Cho)

**Ms. Caitlin Cleveland**  
(Kam Lake)

**Hon. Paulie Chinna**  
(Sahtu)

*Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs*  
*Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for Homelessness*  
*Minister responsible for Youth*  
*Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board*

**Hon. Caroline Cochrane**  
(Range Lake)

*Premier*  
*Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs*  
*Minister responsible for the COVID-19 Coordinating Secretariat*

**Hon. Julie Green**

(Yellowknife Centre)  
*Minister of Health and Social Services*  
*Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities*  
*Minister responsible for Seniors*

**Mr. Jackie Jacobson**  
(Nunakput)

**Mr. Rylund Johnson**  
(Yellowknife North)

**Mr. Jackson Lafferty**  
(Monfwi)

**Ms. Frieda Martselos**  
(Thebacha)

**Ms. Katrina Nokleby**  
(Great Slave)

**Mr. Steve Norn**  
(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

**Mr. Kevin O'Reilly**  
(Frame Lake)

**Ms. Lesa Semmler**  
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

**Mr. Rocky Simpson**  
(Hay River South)

**Hon. R.J. Simpson**  
(Hay River North)  
*Government House Leader*  
*Minister of Education, Culture & Employment*  
*Minister of Justice*

**Hon. Shane Thompson**  
(Nahendeh)

*Minister of Environment and Natural Resources*  
*Minister of Lands*  
*Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission*

**Hon. Caroline Wawzonek**  
(Yellowknife South)

*Minister of Finance*  
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, including responsibility for the Business Development and Investment Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for the Status of Women*

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## YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

**Members Present**

Hon. Diane Archie, Hon. Frederick Blake Jr., Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Hon. Julie Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Martselos, Ms. Nokleby, Mr. Norn, Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.):** Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Finance.

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 132-19(2):  
INDIGENOUS CULTURAL AWARENESS AND  
SENSITIVITY TRAINING

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to announce the release of Living Well Together, the online Indigenous cultural awareness and sensitivity training program for employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Developed by the Department of Finance in collaboration with the Departments of Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services, Living Well Together replaces the GNWT's previous Aboriginal cultural and sensitivity training for its employees. It is a direct response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call for action with respect to professional development and training for public servants. Mr. Speaker, the commission has called upon all levels of government "to provide education to public servants on the history of Indigenous peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous Law, and Aboriginal-Crown Relations." According to the commission, "this will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism."

Living Well Together is built on the northern studies curriculum provided to our students within the Northwest Territories and includes diverse and authentic perspectives of Indigenous people from across the Northwest Territories. Many courageous Northerners shared their personal stories on a wide variety of topics, including the impacts of residential schools. Mr. Speaker, these are important stories

that all Northerners, especially our public servants, should listen to and learn from. On behalf of Cabinet, I want to thank each and every Northerner who told their story so that we could develop this training. This includes many elders, Indigenous governments, community members, Indigenous artists, and GNWT employees who contributed to this training in so many valuable ways.

Living Well Together was created in the spirit of reconciliation and provides opportunities for our employees to reflect on ways to support reconciliation and decolonization as public servants and private citizens in the workplace and within the community. Through careful reflection and deliberate acts of reconciliation, we can make positive changes throughout the Northwest Territories and serve as an example for the rest of Canada. With this in mind, this training will be mandatory for all employees, and the Department of Finance will endeavor to support all current GNWT employees to complete this training within 12 months. My special advisor and I had the benefit of a sneak peek, and we have decided to act as one another's learning partners. We plan to schedule occasions over the coming months to work through the modules together.

Mr. Speaker, we expect this training will have an immeasurable impact on not only our public service but also on the communities we serve. We believe this training has the potential to benefit all residents of the Northwest Territories and will set an example, as I said, for the rest of Canada. As such, this training will be made available to the public. Living Well Together was developed in the spirit of reconciliation. I encourage all employees to begin this training with an open mind and to support one another during this process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 133-19(2):  
AURORA COLLEGE RESEARCH MANDATE AND  
RECOGNITION

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, one of the many exciting developments to expect as we get

closer to the launching of the polytechnic university is increased capacity for northern research. We know that the work underway to increase the number of researchers and build effective research supports for college partners and stakeholders across the Northwest Territories will serve as catalysts for northern social and economic development.

In the areas of research, Aurora College is starting from a place of strength and great promise for the future. In December, it was again recognized as one of Canada's Top 50 Research Colleges for 2020. Aurora College improved its overall ranking among the nation's top research colleges from 48<sup>th</sup> in 2019 to 29<sup>th</sup> in 2020, where it ranked in the top 10 in two categories: research growth and in research intensity. Mr. Speaker, Aurora College recognizes the importance of ongoing collaborations and partnerships with other institutions, Indigenous and community governments, and non-governmental organizations. Leading efforts to ensure the success of research partners is an important part of the work already underway at Aurora College. During a year of significant public health restrictions that threatened long-term research initiatives, Aurora College found innovative ways to leverage its strong presence across the Northwest Territories and helped support the territorial, national, and international research community during these challenging times.

Aurora College continues to take steps to increase research capacity in advance of becoming a polytechnic university. In addition to adding seven new Aurora College research associates who will bring new perspectives and ideas, Aurora College also formalized research partnerships with Hotii Ts'eeda and the Institute of Circumpolar Health Research. These partnerships strengthen northern research capacity and increase the ability to access federal funding.

Mr. Speaker, over the coming year, Aurora College will continue building research capacity with the hiring of three new research chair positions. Aurora campus in Inuvik will see the establishment of a climate change adaptation research chair; Thebacha campus in Fort Smith will house the research chair for Indigenous approaches to environmental management; and the Yellowknife North Slave campus will see the addition of a health and community research chair. These positions are supported through the college's partnership with ArcticNet, a network of centres of excellence of Canada, and will help to strengthen the initial areas of teaching and research specialization for the polytechnic university.

Mr. Speaker, we see the future polytechnic university sitting at the centre of our knowledge

economy and building a stronger future for our businesses and residents, including by empowering our youth to be research leaders of the future. The college accessed external funding this year to create youth and student positions in research, administrative, and logistic roles. This project encourages youth to pursue their interest in education and employment in science, technology, engineering, and math, or STEM. The journey to build research capacity will not end with the establishment of a polytechnic university in 2025; it will continue to empower students to understand and respond to the challenges they face for generations to come. All of this work will support the college's successful transformation to a polytechnic university, an institution where research will be a part of every aspect. Building on current research experience on topics such as climate change, permafrost, heavy metals in soil, renewable energy feasibility studies, intimate partner violence, and many others, the polytechnic university will work to forge stronger ties with Indigenous governments, communities, industry, and the business community to ensure we always look ahead to a stronger, more prosperous, and resilient future.

I want to commend Aurora College for the success it has achieved as they work to create the northern research leaders of tomorrow at an institution that will be built in the North, for the North, and by the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister of Health and Social Services.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 134-19(2):  
CELEBRATING SOCIAL WORK MONTH

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In March of each year, we celebrate social workers across Canada and in the NWT. This year's theme for Social Work Month is Social Workers are Essential.

Mr. Speaker, social workers play a vital role in supporting and maintaining individual, family and community wellbeing across the Northwest Territories. Social workers are trained to help people address personal and systemic barriers that negatively impact them from realizing their full potential. Social workers perform a variety of functions and roles in our communities. Some work in schools, helping children get the services they need to get the best possible education. Others provide mental health services, helping people overcome mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety as well as substance use disorders. When families are in crisis, social workers are there to help them rebuild healthy relationships. Social workers can be found in hospitals, helping patients get optimal care not only while in treatment but

when they return to their families and communities. Social workers also help us to cope with the loss of loved ones.

Social workers also play an integral part in community organizations and in government, helping to create programs and policies to make our society a better and more equitable place for all. This type of work requires a passion for helping others and a commitment to making a difference in people's lives. These professionals have an ethical obligation to advocate for broad social change to address social inequalities that will benefit the marginalized members of our communities and, ultimately, all of us.

Mr. Speaker, Members of this House know the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly made it a mandate priority to improve early childhood development for all children. There are a number of activities being implemented across government to support this priority, including efforts to improve the delivery of children and family services and health and wellness in the NWT. The Government of the Northwest Territories has invested a significant amount of funding to improve services for children, youth, and families in their communities. Social workers advance and provide these services across the NWT. In the last two years, we have funded 15 new social work positions and a number of supporting positions.

On February 1, 2021, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority restructured the Child, Family and Community Wellness Division to better focus the work and bring staff under the umbrella of one team. This change in organizational structure will streamline processes for staff and allow for better collaboration and more consistent delivery of programs across the territory. These investments and new structures will better support social workers in the delivery of these important services.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Cabinet, I want to express how much our government appreciates the hard work and dedication of social workers. I am pleased to have this opportunity to recognize the commitment and positive contributions these individuals make in the lives of children, youth, and families in our communities and thank them for their continued efforts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON K'AMBA CARNIVAL

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the K'atloodeeche First Nation and the volunteers of this year's K'amba Carnival event, which took place this past weekend on the reserve. We have to appreciate the fact that this event has taken place during a period of uncertainty when it comes to celebrations, requiring social distancing and the many rules set out by our Chief Public Health Officer. I am certain that, to pull this event off, it required ingenuity, dedication, and countless hours by the committee, community, and group of volunteers. It required adapting a long-standing and proven event program to a new format during this unprecedented time.

Mr. Speaker, the impact K'amba Carnival has on the K'atloodeeche First Nation spills over into the town of Hay River, where it generates much excitement. I know the people in Hay River look forward to this event as great entertainment and recognition that spring and warmer weather is just around the corner. Therefore, as the MLA for Hay River South and on behalf of the MLA for Hay River North, I would like to send a big thank you from the people of Hay River to the K'atloodeeche First Nation, the K'amba Carnival committee, and the many volunteers who made this event a reality. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ARTS FUNDING

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, in today's market, the art we hear about the most are often the one-off pieces that garner million-dollar price tags, but everyday art can also generate significant economic value. Art is cultural expression and a powerful conduit for healing, wellness, and economic development. Art is essential for individual and community success.

When we look at the global art scene, we marvel at infrastructure like New Zealand's Te Papa, artist-in-residence programs like Fogo Island, and events like Burning Man, but grassroots initiatives just like these exist in the NWT. Our Northern Arts Centre is lush with renowned and passionate artists from the salt plains to the pingos. We just need to be ready to support them.

In 2019, many northern artists, myself included, participated in the NWT Arts Strategy public engagements. Today, we eagerly await for the Arts Strategy that we hope will not only renew this government's commitment to arts and culture but also actively pursue a robust arts industry through education, funding, marketing, infrastructure, and policy work that supports the success of NWT arts.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to a plan, this government needs to reconcile where the arts belong. Today, the responsible for culture and heritage, along with the NWT Arts Council, sits within Education, Culture and Employment, but Industry, Tourism and Investment drives the NWT arts brand, economic diversification, festival funding, business grants and loans, and tourism. You cannot separate art from culture, and you cannot deny the economic potential of either. Supporting the arts is not just about culture or employment or history or community health or self-discovery; it is all of those things. This government needs to own the responsibility of properly housing and fostering its arts and culture to generate employment, expand economic opportunity, and foster community wellness.

Arts in the NWT is at a crossroads. It is time to reset its importance to value the role of all artisans and recommit to art as a foundation to community well-being and our economic future. In its fall 2020 economic statement, the federal government announced \$181.5 million in additional funding for Canadian heritage and Canadian Council for the Arts. We need to ensure that we are well-positioned for this funding as a territory through clear, strategic support of NWT arts that elevate our world-class artists to its rightful place on a global stage. Money is ready to flow to propel the arts, Mr. Speaker, but are we ready to receive it? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HUSKY ENERGY SIGNIFICANT DISCOVERY LICENSE

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. The former Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment issued 10 significant discovery licences for oil and gas during the last Assembly. This was a huge post-devolution resource giveaway. The area covered by these licences is almost 2,200 square kilometres, an area about 40 percent the size of Prince Edward Island. Our government will get no revenues, no taxes, no employment, and no benefits from these areas that are now tied up virtually forever.

Significant discovery licences arose in the federal legislation that we inherited for petroleum resources. They allow companies to have exclusive ownership of oil and gas rights without having to do any work or pay any fees forever. Companies used to be able to get these licences without doing anything except being near another significant discovery licence. A Minister could require drilling to take place, but that has never been done.

Our current Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment has an opportunity to get it right. We heard last week about the buried \$45 million windfall in the main estimates that is a work deposit forfeiture from Husky Energy. We also heard that Husky Energy is asking to convert its Exploration Licence 494 to a significant discovery licence.

Changes to the Petroleum Resources Act made in the last Assembly finally came into force on July 29, 2020. Significant discovery licences are now limited to 15 years but can be renewed forever. Most importantly, the licences "may contain any other terms and conditions... as may be agreed on by the Minister and the interest owner of the significant discovery licence." It's not clear whether that means the Minister can impose work requirements or annual fees that could even rise over time, all to implement the principle of "use it or lose it" and generate some benefits for us. What about the future? Will the Minister consult with Sahtu communities or even regular MLAs before issuing this significant discovery licence to Husky Energy? Will the Minister impose exploration requirements that would create jobs and economic activity for the NWT or will Husky Energy have a veto? I will have questions for the Minister of ITI on what she is doing to protect the public interest in issuing the first significant discovery licence under our amended Petroleum Resources Act. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COVID NAVIGATORS

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On March 16, it will be one year that this Legislative Assembly sat in this House and ended our budget winter session early due to the unknown risks of COVID-19. Shortly after, the borders were closed and a public health emergency was declared in the Northwest Territories. We were told to flatten the curve by staying home, Mr. Speaker. No visitors were ordered. People began to panic out of fear of the unknown. Myself, as many other MLAs, began to become the COVID navigators for our constituents and, for some of us MLAs, even for some other constituents.

I shared as much information I received from the GNWT and answered as many questions I could and sent in concerns and constituent complaints as they were afraid that the people who were in our community were not following the orders in self-isolation. I did not know where to report them, so I sent them to the Minister of Health.

When the ProtectNWT email was set up and the 811, I referred the reports to them, but I also had to continue to send in the email to the ProtectNWT for those who did not have access. Sometimes, we heard back, and sometimes, we didn't. I never knew if they were followed up, and neither did my constituents. Mr. Speaker, I know, at that time, GNWT was establishing on-the-go ways to protect the residents, and as time went on, more and more processes and staff were able to answer and follow-up on concerns of residents, which is great.

Mr. Speaker, I will raise this issue again. My community of Inuvik and the surrounding communities in the Beaufort-Delta have been cut off to services that are not available to my region, and with no road to Yellowknife, our closest road is Whitehorse. We have a shortage of dentist's appointments, and only recently had the dentist's office open in Inuvik with a backlog of clients. No vehicle warranty as vehicles get shipped. It's been 50 below, Mr. Speaker, this winter. They get shipped to Whitehorse for many services that are not available. During normal times, people go to Whitehorse as it is cheaper than flying to Yellowknife for one person. Now, there is even more of a need with many services limited or not even open. Social, public venues are limited or are still not open, and people are suffering from isolation. Mental health issues are of high concern.

Mr. Speaker, I've received and continue to receive letters from my community to continue to raise the issue of having a way for the residents of the Beaufort-Delta to travel to and from the Yukon? We would appreciate if our Premier brings our voices and works with the Yukon government to open the border. Please, give us a window of hope. I will have questions for the Premier. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOUSING UNITS IN NUNAKPUT

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I bring up housing units in the riding of Nunakput. Mr. Speaker, we have the longest and coldest winters in my riding. We're the furthest north. Again, I've brought up in this House, again and again, how the housing units are in need of repair. The Nunakput community, Sach's Harbour, Paulatuk, and Ulukhaktok, we have housing units that were built in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, and then we have one or two units that are fairly new.

Mr. Speaker, some units have been repaired, retrofitted, even been renovated, but in fact, the majority of them still require maintenance and

upkeep on a yearly basis. I have constituents who put blankets on the floors just to keep their feet warm from freezing when they're walking around when it's minus 50. When the wind is blowing, right, the windows and the doors, you'll have piles of snow on the corners, and that's not right, Mr. Speaker. These issues have to be dealt with. The problem that we're having, it takes 18- to 24-months' planning prior to even getting materials in, and then having to build takes probably about a year. In some cases, like right now, there's a unit in the community that's taken over two years to build, and it's not right, Mr. Speaker. We have young families who need units and housing.

I think to myself, there's got to be a way for CMHC to help us and to help our Minister to get these units done quicker and increase our housing allotment per community or get rid of some of the old 1970s units, and build new units that are required for the communities and the young families who need housing. Mr. Speaker, there's been a lot of talk about funding available through CMHC. My communities want to be able to see this funding for improving housing in my riding. We need to do more. We need to have more housing units for the younger generation that's coming up instead of couch surfing and sharing five or 10 people in the unit. It's not right in this day and age. Mr. Speaker, my riding, the units, we need to start planning now to provide housing units for this upcoming year, and I'll have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ENERGY PLAN

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The cost of living in the Northwest Territories keeps rising year in and year out. Every time the cost of diesel goes up, so does the power bill, skyrocketing costs of groceries, cost to repair appliances, cars, trucks, and all-terrain vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, our message for staycations will come at a cost. There's a document from the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly entitled "A Vision For Energy In The Northwest Territories which states, "There's a great deal of consensus across the Northwest Territories on the need to reduce our high costs of energy and the impacts of our energy use on the environment." This was in 2012.

The document further states, "It is time to build on earlier work and establish a vision of a future energy supply and use in the NWT that reflects the goals and aspirations of residents, communities, and Aboriginal governments. The Government of

the Northwest Territories believes that this vision needs to be founded upon the goal of reducing imported oil and greater utilization of local and renewable forms of energy."

Mr. Speaker, I realize the GNWT has made some gains towards this goal but somehow loses interest in pursuing the ultimate goal of reducing our high cost of living. The new and updated energy plan by the GNWT developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, the 2030 Energy Strategy, states its goal to guide the long-term development of secure, affordable, and sustainable energy for transportation, heat, and electricity.

It goes on to state, "The GNWT, including the NWT Housing Corporation, will focus on leading by example by reducing energy use and emissions in its operations." It's also interesting to note the GNWT will also partner with communities and other stakeholders to ensure that the objectives of this strategy are met. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT has long said it wants to lower our cost of living, but are we realizing that goal through actions? Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Members' statements. Member for Great Slave.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday marked International Women's Day, and this year's campaign was Choose to Challenge, something I've personally been trying to do in my life more recently. International Women's Day was established over a century ago, with the first gathering in 1911 supported by over one million people. International Women's Day is not specific to a country, group, or organization. For over 100 years, the fight for gender equality has been formally recognized on this day. However, it remains a battle fought daily.

As I have spoken to in this House before, women have done remarkable things in the scientific realm. They took us to the moon, photographed DNA, and discovered new elements. As I said, Marie Curie is the only person who has won two Nobel Prizes in two separate sciences, and she did so over 100 years ago, at a time when most women didn't even have access to basic education. Currently, only 13 percent of engineers in Canada identify as women, and locally, the Minister of ECE has said that this number is only 5 to 7 percent when it comes to tradespeople.

While my passion has always been to further the inclusion of women in STEM, there is a lot of work to be done in establishing gender balance in all

areas of society, especially now, as the economic downturn of COVID-19, has hit women particularly hard and stalled progress on many gender-equity projects. While International Women's Day 2021 has passed, I wanted to speak today to honour all of the women in my life who have fought for equality and who serve as inspiration.

It is no secret that advancing the situation of women and girls was a huge motivator for me to enter politics. In my career and throughout my life, I have often found myself challenging stereotypes. During these difficult times, I have often relied on the circle of women around me. These amazing women have provided me with the wisdom and knowledge I need to help guide me in my endeavours and are there to comfort me when I stumble.

It's time to recognize women's achievements and challenge gender bias and inequality by seeking out and celebrating women's achievements. Everyone needs to be an ally so we can create an inclusive world. From challenge comes change, so let's choose to challenge gender bias every day and not just on this one day a year. In doing so, we can create a better future for everyone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SYSTEMIC RACISM

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to clear the air about a few things in relation to my personal experience of racism at the NWT SPCA. To begin, Mr. Speaker, I would like to state wholeheartedly that I support the NWT SPCA and all animal shelters for their work in protecting animals. I thank the SPCA for their work in this area. For that reason, I am not in favour of taking away funds from them. I am an animal lover. I have had multiple dogs over the years and was raised living with large dog teams because of my father, who was a dog musher. Dogs were always around me growing up. It was very traditional for trappers to have dog teams. Dogs provide the transportation for our livelihood.

This brings me to my second point. I know there is a process to adopting a dog, and I have been following that process. I sent the SPCA an adoption application in mid-December and called them several times and left multiple voicemail messages about my interest in adopting a dog. Also, not once throughout this process did I identify myself as an MLA. I would never do that. I am an ordinary person who does not expect special treatment. I

always treat everybody with respect and dignity regardless of who they are.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, this whole situation is not about me versus the SPCA. People are losing focus about what I am saying and why I am saying it. This situation is about racism and how it exists in all facets of our society. There is no organization, whether government, non-profit, or otherwise, that is immune to systemic racism. We are talking about the uneven power dynamics of race that's inherent in our society. We are talking about the unconscious racial bias that many people have against people who look like me. We are talking about the ingrained barriers that people of colour face when assessing basic services in the community.

People like me face discrimination every day when accessing services like housing, employment, and even shopping in stores. People like me are followed around in stores because of stereotypes. People like me are denied, undermined, and suppressed all the time. That is a simple fact of our reality. Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, overcoming racism is difficult, exhausting, and uncomfortable work. If our society truly aspires for reconciliation, then we must challenge racism head-on. However, in order to get there, it will take work, and that work will require the effort of all sectors of our society to pitch in and do their part.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that I fully stand by my previous statement on this matter. The way I was treated was not okay. I don't believe I was treated with basic customer practices that people expect from organizations like the SPCA or other NGOs or entities that serve the public. Lastly, once again, Mr. Speaker: Black lives matter; Indigenous lives matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES LEASING POLICY

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fundamental to any community's success is local ownership of land and buildings. Local landlords reinvest their rents into the community. They take more risk on local businesses, and they are key to a community's identity. However, Mr. Speaker, our capital city has a serious problem with local ownership. Thousands of our housing units and

millions of dollars' worth of commercial office space are owned by southern REITs or various southern multi-billion-dollar investment funds. These landlords have long treated real estate as an investment as opposed to the offices and homes that we all live and work in.

Put more bluntly, Mr. Speaker, I want the GNWT to stop leasing from Northview high yield investment trust. I want us to stop being the anchor tenant in all of their buildings when they have repeatedly shown little interest in our community. The GNWT has funded this monopoly for years at a cost to Northerners. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, when many of these long-term leases were signed, Northview was Northern Properties and actually was locally owned. They were signed, and we justified negotiating many of those leases at a higher lease rate as opposed to ownership to build up a northern business. This, in fact, is allowed in the GNWT Leasing of Improved Property Policy. However, we are not allowed to pay a premium to southern landlords, Mr. Speaker. Over the years, these properties have been sold and resold, and we have renewed the leases without any consideration of our own policy.

Our current policy requires that the GNWT only lease at a rate no greater than the cost of ownership. If we are going to sign a lease at a cost greater than owning a building, it must be to a northern business. A lease-versus-ownership analysis is required for every building in every GNWT lease signed over five years. Those premiums can only be paid to northern companies, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Infrastructure manages a \$28-million lease portfolio. That is 109 leases for a total of 626,000 square feet of office space, many of them in downtown Yellowknife. That is millions of dollars that should be going to local landlords, to Indigenous development corporations, and to anyone willing to make sure that our government's rent money stays in this territory. I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure about: despite all the talk of supporting northern businesses, we are not paying our rent to northern businesses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
LUCY JANE SIMON, 2020 WISE WOMAN AWARD  
RECIPIENT

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pleasure and honour that I acknowledge Lucy Simon as a 2020 Wise Woman for the Deh Cho region. I had the opportunity to be at her celebration at Fort Simpson this past

weekend with her family, friends, and the regional leadership. I have known her for over 28-plus years. She is someone I call advisor, mentor, knowledge-keeper, supporter, and, more importantly, "Mom." She has opened her home to my family and me. She treats my children as her grandchildren, and for this, I am truly grateful. As well, I have had the privilege to have gloves and slippers made by her. Everyone has asked where they come from, and they comment on the amazing bead and fur work. One set of her slippers were made for my daughter's wedding, and I wear them in the House.

Lucy Simon was raised in Jean Marie River and is one of eight daughters in a family of 15. Her parents, Mary Louise and Jim Sanguéz, saw many changes from living on the land to living in the settlement. Through it all, they were always emphasizing, maintaining, and preserving the history and culture of Jean Marie River through on-the-land practices and art. The time and patience that her mother took teaching her the art of sewing is a true testament of seeing Lucy's art. She is a very talented artist, known throughout the NWT and nationally, with some of her work displayed at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.

Her passion for creation started at a young age, when she was inspired by her elders and the land around her. Lucy created an extraordinary moose hair tufting called "The Voices of Our Elders," a project that was coordinated by the Open Sky Creative Society. She is very passionate about her creating traditional footwork, gloves, and takes pride in every detail of a finished product. Just as she learned from her mentors, she wants to pass on this creativity and knowledge to those who want to learn. Both her and her husband, Isildur (ph), raised a family of five and now enjoy the grandchildren. They teach them to speak and understand Dene Zhatie when they can and also the importance of education, just as her parents did at every opportunity and shared moment about these teachings of language and culture that her parents shared.

Lucy was employed with the Government of the Northwest Territories at the Deh Cho Health and Social Services division as community health worker for 25 years and continues to mentor those who work there. She is also the successful business manager of her own B and B for the past 18 years. Perhaps the best way to describe Lucy's thoughts are in her own words:

"When I walk through the bush, I see the beautiful northern roses and all the things around me that create pictures in my mind that I need to draw. The pictures I draw and create are interpretations of experience through colour and suit the beauty around me. When I dye moose hair, it is a few

drops here and then that results in multicolours. This is where it is not just one colour but many shapes and patterns such as life."

Mr. Speaker, I wore a suit at her ceremony there, and today, I told her I would wear my suit again in the House today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife South.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AND APPRECIATION FOR SUPPORT

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we have already heard today, yesterday was International Women's Day with a theme of Choose to Challenge. I want to use this opportunity to thank my colleagues, my friends, and my neighbours for their support that gives me my opportunity to choose to challenge in a position not often held by a female. By this, I mean very literal support. My partner works at a remote mine site and had to adapt his work rotation in order to accommodate the risk-mitigation precautions for COVID-19. His extended rotation was not what we planned on when I ran for elected office. The recent outbreak and resulting further two weeks of quarantine was also something I had planned on as we were beginning budget session, sitting until 6:00 p.m. and often later. Over 10 different households helped me with school pickups, and sport or activity driving, and various other childcare supports, plus another handful more checked in to offer their support.

Particularly in that first week of unexpected single parenting, colleagues here no doubt ran into my children when I had to bring them at 8:00 a.m. start on a PD day. Mr. Speaker, they were louder in the hall than what they should have been, but I want to express my gratitude and my pride that the Legislative Assembly is becoming a workplace that is accommodating and welcoming to the realities of working parents. The hours required of elected officials may be a barrier, but we are taking steps to show that it is a barrier that can be overcome. I believe this will help more individuals who are the primary caregivers to children to bring their perspectives into politics.

Mr. Speaker, other families have endured far more challenging work changes as a result of COVID-19. There are of course families with workers who are health workers, other front-line workers, or other rotational workers who are, in fact, now doing three- and four-week shifts, and they are all persevering. I thank them for that. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, if you know a family who you know is having work challenges, please consider checking in and

offering your help. They might not be asking, but they might not be asking because they simply don't have the time or the energy to do the asking. Again, I thank this wonderful community here in Yellowknife. I simply could not be doing my job without all of you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife South. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
INCLUSION NWT, 2020 OUTSTANDING  
VOLUNTEER AWARD RECIPIENT**

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to congratulate the board of directors of Inclusion NWT, the 2020 Outstanding Volunteer Award recipients in the group category. Inclusion NWT is located in my riding, but we all know and recognize their clients, workers, and staff from their presence in the community for many years, including in this building. At any given time, Inclusion NWT is serving 150 clients and families throughout Yellowknife, with services including supported and independent living; employment services; literacy classes; family, children, and teen activities; advocacy; respite services; skills development; and an FASD support service. You will see the Odd Job Squad everywhere, hired by upwards of 200 clients a month, and that is just one high-visibility program.

This impressive list of services is overseen by the nine-member board. In this year of COVID challenges, continued delivery of programming and services has required extra flexibility and adaptation. President Ben Russo and his board hunkered down to make sure all of the clients have been taken care of. While thankful for the award, Mr. Russo has said he would like to give it to the staff, as well, led by Executive Director Lynn Elkin. This group award goes to the board, whose members each deserve special recognition, and I will name them all. Serving with President Ben Russo are Vice President Pooja Chugh; Secretary Catherine Fairbairn; Treasurer Chris Cahoon; and Directors Tony Florio, Esther Rowe, Karen Lajoie, Bri Krekoski, and Pamela Weeks-Beaton. Please join me in congratulating the board of Inclusion NWT for their service, guidance, and commitment to serve clients through the ethic of people helping people. I salute the organization for its incredible contribution to our community. It truly is Inclusion NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR MEMBER'S FAMILY**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. It has been almost a year since all of the craziness of COVID began with us here in the Northwest Territories. While we have been largely unaffected by COVID in terms of actual numbers of COVID cases, there have been many hidden consequences resulting from this pandemic. The restrictions that were put in place to keep us safe from this disease also keep us apart in many other ways. We have seen the impact of this: rise in addictions, mental health, and social services.

In the past four months, my family and I have lost five significant people in our lives. In November 2020, I lost my youngest brother, Troy. It was the most difficult time; it still continues to this day. This past week, we lost my auntie, Therese from Whati. Therese was a second mother to me since my mother passed on in 2014. She took over the role. She was the matriarch for our family, our strength, our rock. Therese was the epitome of a Dene woman, a woman of such great strength, resilience, a traditional woman, a spiritual woman, a woman who loved all unconditionally. If she was here with us today, my auntie would be the one supporting all of us, holding us together in our grief through the most difficult times. She would be standing behind me, holding my hand right now.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very difficult time to stand here before you to talk about the most influential person of all times. Our hearts are broken yet again, and we are asking the public, the Members, for their continuous prayers and support through these difficult times. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Our thought and prayers are with the family and also with you. We're all here for you through these difficult times. Mahsi. Members' statements. Item 4, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 5, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 6, reports of standing and special committees. Item 7, returns to oral questions. Item 8, acknowledgements. Item 9, oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

**Oral Questions**

**QUESTION 642-19(2):  
RCMP HOUSING UNITS**

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. I'd like to ask the Minister if she confirm the construction status of the RCMP houses in Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We had announced 22 of the 42 RCMP units would be constructed this year. We are looking at completion for the Northwest Territories as of October 2021. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** I would also ask the Minister to confirm how the design and the square footage of these units, especially for Hay River, was determined.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** The RCMP units are a federal initiative that took engagement with the RCMP and the federal government. The federal design was submitted and approved by the federal government. The design was from the RCMP.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** I would ask the Minister if she knows if the RCMP members were consulted on the design. I ask this question because the units appear small and seem to lack storage space, which I'm sure those with larger families would require if they're coming North.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Our conversations were with the RCMP and with the federal government for Canada. I'm not too sure about the consultation they would have done with their members. I don't have that information.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister know if the RCMP members are required to move out of their current houses and into the new units, and what will happen with the units they move out of, if they are required to move out? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Absolutely, the RCMP members, I hope they're moving into the units after we built them. It's their project. Also, for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, as the Minister, I am questioning the vacancy of the federal units that will be vacated by the RCMP members, and I am hoping to acquire them by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, that we would hopefully be eligible to be administering them and they would be transferred over to us. That's a conversation that would be further with the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just excited because we've got five new units and the RCMP have got to get moved out, potentially. Today, I brought up aging housing units in my riding of Nunakput. I'm asking today: can the Minister tell me how fast we are accessing renovation funds per community in my riding to start planning renovations for this coming summer? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year, when we had started the restrictions and we started to act on COVID-19, the Housing Corporation had acquired \$5 million and had distributed that amongst the LHOs in the smaller communities for housing repair. Right now, for your region, we have a number of units that are under repair and scheduled to be completed for this year. Just for the Member, we do have new construction built for Ulukhaktok, where we have two public housing units that are coming up, which doesn't seem like very much, but then it's the retrofits that we do have throughout the territory, where we have to bring these public housing units up to standard. I'm looking at hopefully completing the public housing repair this year of 2021. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Are there any plans to replace the old Weber units that were built in 1970 in communities? Like, take them off the books and be able to bring in new builds in regard to the community, for each community in my riding, and be able to bring in new units for the people, and maybe even more complexes?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** I'm quite eager to start working with home ownership throughout the Northwest Territories. The Weber units, we are working on a strategy within the Housing Corporation to have these units up for sale, to transfer them over to the public housing tenants who are acquiring the single-family dwelling units. We do have a rollout of units that will be coming together within the next few months. I don't have that list in front of me, as it hasn't been finalized. Just to try to speak about the Member's comments about his riding and looking at the condition of the homes in those communities, as well, these are shoreline communities, so I hear the Member on the damages that are quite significant in that riding. We are working as a Housing Corporation, and we are also working with the Indigenous groups in that riding, as well, to access the co-investment fund. Hopefully within the next couple of weeks, we will have an announcement to make.

**MR. JACOBSON:** I want to thank the Minister for that. This is a question in regards to getting ready for the summer retrofits and renovation season. I'm just wondering if we could get the third party to come into the communities to go and see every house in, say, Sach's Harbour and Paulatuk and Ulukhaktok to see, under the housing renovation, what the house needs and to see what is accessible to do for this coming year and be able to get it on the barge before winter season comes again. Is that possible, and using local hire to do that?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Condition rating is a priority, as well. We are looking at the public housing units. I know that we are reaching the 40-year mark for them, and yes, I will have my staff go into the Member's riding and to take a look at the conditions of the units that are there because I'm quite interested to see the amount of retrofits we need to get done for that riding and making sure that we do get material into that riding on time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that again. I would like to see if the Minister is able to commit to a tour this summer and not only that, but making sure that local people are hired to do the jobs and not bring in outsiders because outsiders, that's the problem that we've been having in my riding. I need local hire and local contractors to get those contracts so we're providing jobs for the community and it's done locally on a timely and cost-effective manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** I am a supporter, as well, for local hire, but some of the retrofits that are required, we do need the expertise to be flown in and to pass the inspection of the work that is potentially going to be done. I don't know the level of work that needs to be done, but I will keep the Member informed as we go forward and looking at possibilities of working with those specific communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 644-19(2):  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES ENERGY PLAN

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I do notice that former Premiers' photos are in the past energy reports, so my questions are for the Premier even though her photo is not in one yet. The Premier must be aware of the need to get a grip on the escalating cost of living in the territory. Has the Premier provided direction to Cabinet to come up

with innovative ways for energy savings to curb the cost of living? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll begin this line of questioning. I am just totally unhappy that my picture is not in the energy strategy. I have to say that, Mr. Speaker. Do I have a grasp on the cost of living? Mr. Speaker, I've said it more than enough times. I was a single parent for many years. I exactly know how hard it is to live in the Northwest Territories, so I will just stop at those questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Some of the largest energy users of fossil fuels are the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, and Marine Transportation Services. Can the Premier commit to directing the departments to submit energy plans to guide the long-term development of secure, affordable, and sustainable energy for transportation, heat, and electricity?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I do know that we have a long-term energy strategy. However, it is not done in my portfolio. It is the Minister of Infrastructure, so I'd like to defer the questions to the Minister of Infrastructure.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have under the 2030 Energy Strategy, the GNWT and its partners will invest \$400 million over the life of this strategy. These are to ensure we have a reliable energy system as well as to address some of the cost of the energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We are on track to meet the strategic objectives of the energy strategy. We rolled out the new GNWT greenhouse grant program for governments, buildings, and industry to be able to support alternative energy and efficiency. We've also doubled some of the Arctic Energy Alliance funding to be able to efficiently triple the amount of reliable rebates available to residents, businesses, as well as communities. We're also setting the stage for our larger energy projects such as hydro power. With that, Mr. Speaker, I think that just goes to show that, within our current strategy, we are meeting some of our standards. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Vision from 2020 was founded upon the goal of reducing imported fuels and greater utilization of local and renewable forms of energy. Can the Premier commit to developing a comprehensive biomass strategy that can be utilized by all departments, including NTPC?

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** I thought I heard Premier in there, but that's fine. We are always looking at ways to be able to reduce some of the costs, especially to the public, NTPC, housing, Housing Corporation. That's why we buy bulk, and we use MTS to be able to deliver some of our fuel services up and down the Mackenzie Valley Highway -- soon, we'll have a highway, it's just the Mackenzie Valley.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All my questions are all related to biomass strategy and not to liquid fuels. Electricity rates keep climbing every time the price of diesel goes up. I note the hydro dams and plants burn up a significant amount of diesel to operate. Can the Premier or Infrastructure Minister commit to having NTPC find innovative strategies to lowering their greenhouse gas emissions using biomass, and that, in turn, lowers the cost of electricity customers have to pay? Mahsi.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** The Government of the Northwest Territories has delivered a number of biomass projects to be able to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and also operating costs. The use of wood pellets, boilers, has proven to be a reliable technology for the NWT and the residents. As well as businesses, local and territorial governments have all benefited from some of these successes. The use the biomass heating, like the Member mentioned, is considered for all GNWT facilities, and are currently being constructed. These are some of the projects that we are doing now, and like I said, we talked about the 2030 Energy Strategy and also the action plan. This is stuff we're working on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 645-19(2):  
HUSKY ENERGY SIGNIFICANT DISCOVERY  
LICENSE

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Last week, the Minister revealed that she is working on issuing a significant discovery licence for Husky Energy under the amended Petroleum Resources Act. This will be the first significant discovery licence issued under our improved regime. Can the Minister tell us whether she's going to consult Sattu communities, Indigenous governments, and Regular MLAs before issuing the significant discovery licence? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories does indeed consult with Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations at the stage of when there's a call for bids. It is much earlier in the process than where this particular item is at. In this instance, what is relevant here is Section 30 of the new Petroleum Resources Act, which actually says that the Minister shall issue the significant discovery licence if certain conditions are met which, indeed, they are here for Husky. As such, I won't have any discretion in this particular instance. The reason that the consultation takes place earlier and, in this case, took place, was under the previous federal regime. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** That's great to hear. I hope this is not going to be another resource giveaway, but the Minister sort of prefaced my next question: Section 30.3 of the Petroleum Resources Act says that a significant discovery licence "may contain any other terms and conditions as may be agreed on by the Minister and the interest owner of the significant discovery licence." It's not clear whether that means the Minister can impose work requirements or annual fees that could even rise over time or whether Husky Energy has a veto. Can the Minister tell us whether it is her intention to pose any terms and conditions in this significant discovery licence that require exploration to be carried out, northern benefits, or annual fees?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** As I mentioned earlier, the particular instance here of Husky Oil is one where the call for bids stage took place in 2011-2012 under a pre-devolution regime, under a totally different regime than that which is envisioned by the new Petroleum Resources Act. The new act certainly does give the opportunity at the earlier stage of that call for bids to include rentals and fee structures and opportunities to really increase the possibility for revenue, but again, in this particular instance, we are well past that stage. I would also note that, yes, the new act includes the opportunity for issuing benefit plans, and in this instance, Husky would still, should it choose to proceed undertaking activity, have to go through the process of submitting a benefit plan. With respect to those parts of the process where they predated the current regime, there is not a fair opportunity at this stage to be imposing items that weren't there previously.

However, this is a somewhat unusual situation. Husky is, I believe, one of the last if not the last occasions where we are pulling something that happened in this pre-devolution time and putting it into the new act with the new stage as it goes through its evolution of its licence from the call for bids through to production. The questions being asked are ones that, in the future, when we are looking at new discoveries, I'll be able to answer a

strong and firm yes into the future with those new projects.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I'm a bit perplexed at what I just heard. We changed this legislation in the last Assembly so we would give the Minister the authority to impose terms and conditions to get northern benefits; otherwise, we just give the company a significant discovery licence and they can sit on it for 15 years and do nothing. Is this Minister going to use her discretion to impose some terms and conditions to get northern benefits, or is she just going to give Husky Energy a blank cheque?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Again, this is an occasion where Husky originally had their processes done or their bids done in 2011 and 2012, and there is an element of fairness in the regime that we have to ensure to include at all times so that no business or industry of any sector is going to think that they come in here under a certain regime with a certain set of expectations and have it changed under them. In this case, while yes, if they intend to go out onto the land and conduct activities, they will have to be filing their benefit plans, and those benefit plans then have to now be made public. That is under the new regime. It is a tremendous opportunity for northern communities, but with respect to imposing, now, rentals and fees when they didn't have those imposed on them in the past, no, we're not going to be dragging something from 10 years ago and applying this. That's not fair, and that's not the right way to do business. In this particular instance, again, the act is getting that power now looking forward, and certainly, that's something that everyone can move forward understanding what that regime is going to be so that, into the future, there will continue to be those opportunities.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Minister for that. In the existing exploration licence for Husky Energy, there already is an annual fee per hectare the company has to pay. Now, is the Minister prepared to keep that kind of annual fee in the significant discovery licence, or is she just going to give everything away? I want to know from the Minister: she has discretion to do the right thing and secure benefits for the North. Is she going to do that, or is she going to give this away, not even include an annual fee, as there is in the current exploration licence? Will she impose a fee in the significant discovery licence, same as what's in the exploration licence? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** This licence has been subject to significant review from the

Department of Justice because of the fact that there was so much that had to come in from the past and into the present. That has been some of the challenge here. I'm not trying to avoid the question. I'm just trying to make sure that I'm not here on the floor of the House getting into something that really has gone through significant legal review, as I've said. I would certainly not expect that there is going to be less fees offered or a freer ride now than what it has been in the past. The significant discovery licence here flows from the exploration licence that was in place, and I'm quite certain that we will continue to follow that approach and looking for it. If they are going to look to renew, which is one of the new benefits of the act, then they are going to be looking to renew knowing that there is now this new regime in place where there may be additional or enhanced fees and additional or enhanced reporting, and additional or enhanced requirements. Again, I'm simply trying to steer us to the fact that, as we go forward, there is a new act that gives a lot more power and puts a lot more expectations on the industry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

QUESTION 646-19(2):  
YUKON-NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BORDER  
RESTRICTIONS

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Premier. As to my statement, I will be looking at the Yukon-NWT border. Has the Premier had conversations with the Yukon Premier about a bubble with the NWT, since he has the power to open the border on the Yukon side? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I have had discussions with Premier Silver from the Yukon government around exemptions for residents to cross over the borders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. SEMMLER:** I'll wait to say if that's good news or not. With the high uptake of Moderna vaccine that we've been hearing of, and I know that the communities in my region have really been posting a lot that they've been getting high percentages of first and second doses. Recently, with all over 18 in Inuvik being able to receive the COVID vaccine, that covers the Beaufort-Delta, anyone over 18. Will there be a Yukon-NWT bubble anytime soon after those discussions?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I have had discussions with Premier Silver from the Yukon Territory. He is more than interested in having

exemptions for residents to go across the border. We are, as well, interested in that. However, I have to put it out there: Premier Silver has let me know that, if he was to consider having an exemption, not a bubble, but an exemption, then he would not be okay with us closing the border when they open up to British Columbia; and in conversations, it will only be a couple of weeks, he's assuming, before they open up to British Columbia. At this time, that is the underlying factor that is not good news for us.

**MS. SEMMLER:** That's not good news, but my next question will be: will the Premier have discussions with the Minister of health and the CPHO, or has had discussions with them, on what the NWT plans on doing, especially knowing that we have higher rates of vaccine?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Absolutely, we have been having discussions with our CPHO around what will happen when the majority of residents in the NWT get vaccinated; 75 percent is herd immunity. However, there is still a population, there are still people who have not, will not, or cannot get immunized, and we have a whole population of children who we don't have a vaccine for. The major factor is actually that they're not projecting that the vaccines will be delivered in the South until late fall, September, so we have serious concerns. There is not enough research. My understanding is that, even if we have the vaccines ourselves, can we still transmit COVID-19 to other people? Those are questions we don't know. I know that our CPHO is well-aware of the mental health, and I know that she is tired of it just as much as all of us. Her job is to make sure that we keep as safe as possible, and she is trying to do that.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. Final supplementary. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The next question I am going to ask is: how long are we going to be in this public health emergency? I refer back again to the Emerging Wisely plan. I think the people of the Northwest Territories, the people of the Beaufort-Delta, have a voice, too, just like the people at the mines do when they are given exception after exception. How long will we be in this public health emergency, and do residents who have been vaccinated have the option to challenge this public health emergency if they choose to, especially after they have been vaccinated? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I would like to defer that question to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Premier. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the question. The CPHO conducts regular risk assessments of the context of COVID-19, and it is her view that a public health emergency still exists. As a result, her public health orders remain in place, and as a result, the self-quarantine for 14 days remains in place until a time when she doesn't think that that risk any longer exists.

In order to change those orders, as the Premier said, she has to do a scan of, for example, vaccine levels. While the NWT is now over 40 percent vaccinated, the number for the whole of Canada is 1.42 percent. There's not anything like equality of vaccination across the country. Secondly, there is still community transmission of COVID-19 in some southern jurisdictions. That's something that we have worked very hard to prevent from happening here.

The third part is that, while we know the vaccine reduces how sick people become with COVID-19, we don't have definitive answers about whether it also stops transmission, so that whether, as a vaccinated person, I can still carry the virus with me and pass that on. We are very interested in making the changes that the Member is talking about. We understand that people are fed up with the isolation, and they would like to be reunited with their friends and family, their former lives, and we look forward to a time when we can truly get this behind us, but that moment is not now. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 647-19(2):  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES LEASING POLICY

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Infrastructure about who exactly the GNWT pays its rent to. My first question is: how much a year do we pay in leasing to southern landlords?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every year, we pay approximately \$18 million. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** That's the \$18 million that I really would encourage the department to look at and see if we can make that a smaller number and give that to some northern businesses. One of my concerns is that our Leasing of Improved Real Property Policy only permits us to pay a premium to a northern business, and if we are going to rent from a southern business, it actually has to be cheaper

to lease as opposed to own. I am a little concerned that, as these buildings have been sold off, resold, merged, and acquiesced over the years, we have fallen out of compliance with our own policy. My question to the Minister is: is the Minister confident that that \$18 million is, in fact, in compliance with our own leasing policy?

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Yes, we are in compliance with the Leasing of Improved Real Property Policy.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I struggle with how that is the case. In a previous analysis, it showed that it's actually cheaper for us to own our buildings than it is, often, to lease them. This was part of the analysis that justified building the new government building and justified the GNWT building large office buildings in the past was that we could do it cheaper to own than lease. How does the Minister rectify saying that we are paying \$18 million to southern landlords with the fact that we have previously concluded that it's cheaper to own our own buildings as opposed to leasing them?

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** If the Member is able to share their document so that we can review it and perhaps be happy to respond because, right now, I am not sure how to answer without any context to this document that the Member is referring to.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The document I'm mostly talking about is the fact that we built a giant building, and we decided not to lease it. My final question to the Minister here is: if, in fact, we are renting any of this \$18 million to a non-northern landlord, will the Minister commit to conducting the cost benefit analysis of lease to own versus the policy and make sure we are not, in fact, paying a premium to any of these southern landlords? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** We will review these leases as they expire to have a look to make sure that there is the cost benefit. However, I do want to say that, in accordance with the policy, we undergo lease versus own analysis proposed on new lease contracts with terms of over 10 years. Currently we own 28 percent, and we lease 72 percent of our general office space, which is influenced by a number of things: location, local market conditions, operational needs, assessment, and also availability of capital. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 648-19(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ARTS STRATEGY

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. During my Member's statement, I referenced additional funding that was earmarked in the fall 2020 federal economic statement. I am wondering how much of the \$181.5 million in additional funding for arts and heritage does the Minister intend to request from the federal government, and does the anticipated NWT Arts Strategy support this request? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. None and no. The reason for those answers is because we have been informed by the federal government that this money is not flowing to governments. It's not flowing to provincial or territorial governments. It will be distributed through the Canada Council for the Arts. What that means is that there are a limited number of organizations in the territory that will actually be able to access this funding. We have a lot of artists in the territory who are just individuals. It might be someone making slippers in their housing and doing beading. Those individuals can't access that funding.

I have had conversations with the federal Minister about this before. During some of the COVID relief funding that rolled out, they did have an application process where individual artists could apply, but that's not the case in this situation. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to request any of this funding. Therefore, we can't, obviously, build it into our Arts Strategy, but we will support artists in the territory in their attempts to access this funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** That's not fabulous news, because a lot of the extra funding and grants that are available to northern artists do come through and are filtered through our government system. They either come from ITI or they come from the NWT Arts Council through ECE. I am wondering if the Minister can confirm or not if NWT artists would actually be better served by an NWT Arts Council that was independent of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** I think that the Member might be envisioning a different body than what our arts council currently is. Our arts council helps make decisions about how to distribute the funding provided by ECE. I think the Member might be thinking of something like an artists' collective in the territory or something like that. While there is, perhaps, merit to those discussions, that's not really what the arts council is at this point.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** If the Minister is wondering if I have big dreams for arts in the Northwest

Territories, the answer is yes. I'm wondering if the Minister would be willing to have a conversation with the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment about kind of our disjointed approach to art within the Northwest Territories. We currently have culture and heritage housed under as well as the arts council housed under ECE, and then we have tourism, which has a huge cultural piece to it, and, I believe, a huge untapped market for arts in the Northwest Territories and on the global stage. I'm wondering if the Minister will have a conversation about how to really bring together arts within the GNWT so that we can better support northern artists and give them that stage that they rightfully deserve?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** This is a conversation that's been going on for years and years. I think that, from the outside, ultimately, when it comes to programs that support our residents, there should be no lack of service or service disruptions or poor service based on how its distributed among different departments. Ideally, the GNWT should be working together, sort of an integrated service delivery approach, and provide services to residents with a resident focus. How the government does that needs to be coordinated. I think that there's this coordination between ITI and ECE, and it would be difficult to completely separate this file. ITI isn't the type of department that would take over responsibility for the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, for example; and ECE isn't necessarily the type of department who promotes and sells internationally. I think that the approach that we have now is to utilize the expertise in both departments and work together. That being said, I'm always looking for ways to do things better, and I'm happy to have that conversation.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to having more conversations about this with the Minister because I think it merits further conversation. My last question I really want to know: does the Minister intend to table the NWT Arts Strategy during this sitting? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Based on the questions that I've gotten in the House, the feedback that committee has provided during our main estimates review, both in camera and in public, there's additional work being done on the Arts Strategy. I think it's incumbent upon us when we hear things to incorporate that feedback. We will do that. We will be providing standing committee, both, I believe, Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment and the Standing Committee on Social Development with copies of the draft for additional feedback in the coming weeks and likely

will table at the next sitting of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 649-19(2):  
HUSKY ENERGY SIGNIFICANT DISCOVERY  
LICENSE

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to ask some further questions of the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment on this significant discovery licence that she seems to be poised to issue to Husky Energy. I heard some very disturbing things from the Minister, but I think I'll try to boil it down into fewer, simpler questions, maybe, and see where we get here. Does the Minister have the authority under the amended Petroleum Resources Act to issue significant discovery licences that contain any other terms and conditions? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of ITI.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Section 30.3 of the Petroleum Resources Act does state that the licence "must be in a prescribed form and may contain any other terms and conditions, not inconsistent with this act or the regulations, as may be agreed on by the Minister and the interest owner of the significant discovery licence." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that excellent reading of Section 30.3. Does this mean, then, that an applicant for a significant discovery licence has a veto over terms and conditions?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** It doesn't say a veto. It doesn't say that the party must, shall, but it does say, as may be agreed to. Mr. Speaker, as I had said earlier, when the processes come through, if indeed there are to be new calls for bids, which would then move through exploration licence, significant discovery declarations, and all the way through production, this act now governs that entire evolution. This act will create a system, one that is reasonable, one that is certain, one that people can actually understand what is expected of them, and including the fact that you do now have the ability to make these types of additions to the significant discovery licence.

Mr. Speaker, I wasn't a Member at the time when this new act was. I know the MLA certainly was. I'm sure they're familiar with the vision here, which is one that is meant to give more tools to the hands of a Minister before issuing a discovery licence. Look, at the end of the day, it is to be as agreed to. Again, that is why, now, when issuing a call for bid, it's

going to be very clear what the expectations through that evolution will be.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. I've heard lots of references to what happened in the past by the feds. I don't really care what they did. They didn't do a good job, and it looks like we seem to be bound by that for some reason. In the current exploration licence, this exploration licence covers 175,000 hectares. In there, there's the ability to charge a rental, and the rental varied from \$3 up to \$8 per hectare. That means, at the end of the exploration licence, we're getting \$1.4 million a year in terms of a rental for that exploration licence. That's the same amount the Minister is going to give away with the reduction in the small business tax. Here's a way to make up that revenue. Is the Minister going to impose a rental fee in the significant discovery licence equivalent to what's already in the exploration licence?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** This particular discovery licence is the last one that is grandfathered. That was the point I had tried to make earlier. I think I wasn't, perhaps, putting it all together very clearly, but it is a grandfathered one. It's the last one of its kind. Mr. Speaker, I, also, would prefer to look forward into the future and not be talking about items that come forward from the past. Because this particular one and all of the things that it's associated to in the other licences it's associated to don't have a rental fee put into their significant discovery licence, out of simple fairness and out of simple fact, it is not appropriate to take something that was under a previous legal regime. It's already been wedged into this new legal regime where it's already not going to have an indeterminate significant discovery licence. It's going to have only a 15-year licence, and it's going to come with the expectation of having benefit plans if, in fact, there's work. There are significant new benefits under the new regime, but some things, putting in the rental fee, which others that it came up with, didn't have -- Mr. Speaker, on full reflection and the legal review, that's not a fair way to proceed. It's not a good way to show ourselves to have a good reputation for fairness, and it certainly exposes us to legal risk. That's the challenge that I'm faced with, Mr. Speaker. Going forward, this act does give the ability to, from day one when there's a bid, set up a system where there are bids, where there's rental fees and fees that will bring in, hopefully, a better sort of revenue into the Northwest Territories.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. I'm not interested in waiting 15 years to reopen the significant discovery licence. The Minister has the ability now

to include terms and conditions that will benefit Northerners. She doesn't seem to be prepared to exercise that discretion. My question to the Minister is: in whose interest is she acting in issuing this significant discovery licence, the company's or the public's? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** I take my responsibilities as a Minister very seriously. I, certainly, am not going to stand and act in anything other than in the interests of the public of the Northwest Territories, but that includes, Mr. Speaker, an understanding and awareness of the rule of law and legal advice that we might receive as Ministers. I don't act on my own. I don't act without advice. I don't act without looking to the department. I don't act without looking to the Department of Justice when the time is appropriate. This was an usual legal problem. I could see that from day one when it came to my desk. We sought legal advice on how do we proceed fairly as a government? How do we act fairly as a department? How do I take something from the past regime and put it into the new one? I'm acting, in part, on the legal advice. Yes, I have powers to do things, but I am not going to act in a vacuum; I am going to act on the best advice that I have around me. That, Mr. Speaker, is what I am doing here. It is always with the interests of the people of the Northwest Territories, to demonstrate to everyone that we act fairly and in process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

QUESTION 650-19(2):  
RCMP HOUSING UNITS

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to continue questioning the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation with respect to RCMP units. I would ask the Minister: how many housing units currently occupied by RCMP members in Hay River could be available to the NWT Housing Corporation after the RCMP members move into their new units? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that number with me on hand, but just for the Member's information is that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is seeking to acquire all federal housing units throughout the Northwest Territories and looking at if we would be able to administer and if those units would be able to be transferred over to the Housing Corporation for our program delivery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** That is good news. At least they are moving ahead trying to get some units, even though they may not be new. These units were to be acquired. Has the Minister or the department identified a use for them, whether it be public housing, market housing, or home ownership?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** The Housing Corporation has a variety of rental and home ownership opportunities and home repair programming, as well. Once we are able to determine what we are able to acquire from the federal government, we will be able to determine the type of programming that we will be offering once the units possibly can be transferred.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** If these units were to be acquired, can the Minister confirm if the department knows the condition of the units currently occupied, or would they come over retrofitted?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Once we do, if we are able to acquire the units from the federal government, we will be able to make further determinations.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I am trying to do is: I would like to get some units for Hay River before my term is up, so if the repairs or upgrades on those units seem to be cost-prohibitive, would the department look at demolishing them and using the properties to build new units? We gave up six pieces of property, I think it was, for the RCMP units, so I would like to see that land at least be used to build new public housing units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** It would be determined once we are able to acquire these units. I do hear the Member. I am trying to see what I could get in the community of Hay River, and I do realize that we have not had any new builds in that community, as well. Also, I am looking at addressing the seniors issue, as well, for the community. So far, the Housing Corporation has addressed the homelessness issue, but we are looking to work further. Once we get a final answer from the federal government, I will be contacting the Member and looking at specifics for the housing programming in his riding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

QUESTION 651-19(2):  
RETROFIT OF THE HIGH RISE IN HAY RIVER

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not get any of these questions prior. I am just writing them as I am sitting here. I am trying to stay awake. Anyways, I would like to ask the Minister if her department has considered looking at the Mackenzie Place high rise to possibly purchase it and do a retrofit and use it for public and market housing or if any work has been done in that area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is a strong advocate for the high rise in Hay River. Looking at that building, we are in conversations with the owner presently, and those are ongoing, as well, and we are looking at the co-investment funding applications, as well. The rapid rehousing and looking at federal programming that would best suit the conditions of that high rise. However, we also realize that there are a lot of additional issues with that building, but going forward, I will provide an update to the Member as to where the owner had left off, on the last status of the building. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** The Minister mentioned additional issues. I would ask the Minister: what amount of work has gone into assessing that building on the engineering side, the health side, the fire, electrical, and mechanical? How much effort has this government or her department put into making an assessment of that building?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** I haven't received a current status as of today, but I do know that this is a collaborative approach that does affect a number of my colleagues' departments, as well, to acquire the current status. Also, there were some deficiencies within that building. There was a fire that destroyed one floor of the building, as well, but also the structure was aged. However, in the time being, I will provide an update to the Member because we have been in contact with the owner of the building.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** My concern is that, when we lost the high rise, it displaced a number of people, and when people get displaced in Hay River, they are either on the street or they may not tend to move to Yellowknife or other northern communities; they tend to move south. That means that we lose some federal funding. The cost to accommodate people who are on the street is probably between \$8,000 to \$12,000 per month per person, which, if we took that, we could house four people. I am asking the Minister: what is her plan to ensure that we find some public housing units and rental units in Hay River for displaced persons from the high rise and also other people who are on

the wait list and cannot find a place but are forced to move?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** The Housing Corporation has been in talks with a couple of the non-profit organizations in the Member's riding. I just wanted to reiterate again that the Housing Corporation did act on the homelessness initiative in Hay River, and we were able to provide a portion of funding to that initiative that they wanted to work towards. Also, I wanted to just express that, when COVID-19 had hit last year, there was a huge need to address the homelessness issue throughout the Northwest Territories, and we did acquire a motel, as well, to help alleviate and accommodate the most vulnerable population in the Member's riding.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to thank the Minister for answering those questions without prior knowledge of them. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Taken as a comment. Oral questions. Item 10, written questions. Member for Deh Cho.

### Written Questions

#### WRITTEN QUESTION 24-19(2): ASSESSING AND MANAGING CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN THE GOVERNMENT

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My written question is regarding assessing and managing conflicts of interest in the government. The Code of Conduct Respecting Conflict of Interest and Oath of Office and Secrecy for the Employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories formulates the ethics and values that public servants are expected to follow in their behaviour and describes the consequences of failure to observe the code. In light of the high number of activities Government of the Northwest Territories employees undertake in the voluntary sector, in their communities, in other governance, private and for-profit matters, my question to the Minister of Finance is:

1. How many GNWT employees currently have approval to undertake outside activities, broken down by whether the activity is outside employment and/or self-employment; service (with or without remuneration) on boards, councils, or committees; and volunteer activities;
2. What is the number of GNWT employees who have been found to be in conflict of interest at any given time, broken down by year for the

past 10 years;

3. What responsibility does the deputy head have if an employee is found to be in a conflict of interest;
4. Are there any appeal mechanisms in place if someone feels a conflict exists that has been dismissed by the deputy head; and
5. New forms of partnership between government and the private sector and more public engagement by governments mean that conflicts of interest may take new forms. What kind of training is the GNWT providing to ensure that those providing approval to outside work have a good understanding of when conflicts of interest may arise; and that all employees, including those who have left the service, understand the appropriate interplay between their employment and any outside commitments, and in fact comply with the codes of conduct?

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Written questions. Item 11, returns to written questions. Item 12, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 13, petitions. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services.

### Tabling of Documents

#### TABLED DOCUMENT 345-19(2): GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO MOTION 11-19(2): CREATION OF A NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ELDERS' STRATEGY

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: "Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 11-19(2): Creation of a Northwest Territories Elders' Strategy." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister of Infrastructure.

#### TABLED DOCUMENT 346-19(2): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 589-19(2): FORT SMITH REGIONAL AIRPORT

#### TABLED DOCUMENT 347-19(2): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 606-19(2): ACCESS TO INTERNET FOR STUDENTS

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following two documents: "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 589-19(2): Fort Smith Regional Airport;" and "Follow-up Letter for Oral

Question 606-19(2): Access to Internet for Students." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 31-19(2):  
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO  
MARCH 29, 2021

**MR. JOHNSON:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on Thursday, March 11, 2021, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on Friday, March 12, 2021, it shall be adjourned until Monday, March 29, 2021; and further, that, any time prior to March 29, 2021, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, or at a time later than the scheduled resumption of the House, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Item 17, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act; Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupational Certification Act; Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Interpretation Act; Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Securities Act; Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; Committee Report 8-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on Motion 5-19(2), Referral of Point of Privilege Raised by Member for Monfwi on March 10, 2020; Committee Report 9-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2019 Territorial General Election; Committee Report 10-19(2), Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report on Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act; Minister's Statement 77-19(2), National Housing Co-Investment Fund; Tabled Document 165-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 1-19(2), Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery, Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 166-19(2) Government

of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 2-19(2), Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery, Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 167-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 3-19(2), Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery, Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 286-19(2) Main Estimates 2021-2022. By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 1-19(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hours of adjournment to consider the business before the House, with the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

### Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Norn.

**MR. NORN:** Marsi cho, Madam Chair. Committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022, for the Legislative Assembly and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Marsi cho.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. We will take a short recess and resume with Legislative Assembly.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022. Does the Speaker have any opening remarks?

**HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.:** Yes, Madam Chair. I am pleased to present the 2021-2022 Main Estimates for the Legislative Assembly. Overall, the Legislative Assembly's estimates propose an increase of \$1,723,000 or 7.6 percent over the 2020-2021 Main Estimates.

These estimates represent the important work we will undertake during the upcoming fiscal year and focus on the following four overarching priorities:

- addressing the need for additional office space within the Office of the Clerk as a result of an increase in staff;
- being responsive to our statutory obligations with the establishment of the independent

commission to review Members' compensation and benefits and the electoral boundaries commission;

- continuing to expand our language and interpreter services within the Legislative Assembly; and
- supporting the developing needs of our statutory offices.

Thank you, Madam Chair. This concludes my opening remarks. I look forward to answering any questions the Members may have.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Do you wish to bring witnesses into this House?

**HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.:** Yes, I do, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Mr. Speaker, would you please introduce your witnesses?

**HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Directly behind me, we have Ms. Kim Wickens, director of corporate services, and also Acting Clerk Glen Rutland. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Committee has agreed to forgo general comments. Does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Okay. Committee, we will defer the departmental summary and review the estimates by activity summary, beginning with expenditures on behalf of Members, starting on page 8. Questions? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I would like an explanation of the increase for the Members' pension expenses between the current financial year and what is being requested for 2021-2022. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.:** I will turn that to Ms. Wickens.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Ms. Wickens.

**MS. WICKENS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The change in Members' pension expense is an increase to \$340,000, and the change is a result of the changes in membership resulting from the election. The new membership and lower discount

rate increased liability, which resulted in an increase to the pension expense.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. It's not as if anybody is going to get a pension increase, then. This is, as I remember, a defined benefit pension. It's just that we have more members that are eligible to draw down now. That's what's happened here. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**MS. WICKENS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. No, this does not raise the pension benefits for Members. The contribution ensures that pension plans are funded to a level to meet current and future needs of the Assembly pension plan.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Are there any further questions on expenditures on behalf of Members? Seeing none, please turn to page 9, Legislative Assembly, expenditures on behalf of Members, operations expenditures summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$9,957,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. We will now turn to the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, beginning on page 10, with information items on page 12. Questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I understand that funding for the Chief Electoral Office is somewhat cyclical. If we look in 2019-2020, an election year, it's \$1,486,000, and then from year to year, it's about \$500 million. However, I see that there is an increase here. Can I just get an explanation why there is an increase outside of an election year? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.:** Thank you. I'll turn this over to Ms. Wickens.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Ms. Wickens.

**MS. WICKENS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The increase in the expenses for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer is a result of staffing. They are hiring an elections administrator as well as a deputy chief electoral officer to begin to staff the office to prepare for the election in 2023.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It is kind of: we slowly bring on positions to build back up to that number, and then we go down again. Do we have any kind of projections for what next year looks like that could be provided to Members? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.:** Thank you. As mentioned, we look to have the deputy officer for Chief Electoral Officer and also administrative staff. I'll see if Ms. Wickens would like to add anything. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Ms. Wickens.

**MS. WICKENS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Chief Electoral Officer has identified that there will be increases in both the staff for next year and as well as an increase to prepare for the election, which will include currently right now the systems are hibernation. There will be more money put to those next fiscal, as well.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Are there any further questions under the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer? Seeing none, please turn to page 11, Legislative Assembly, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$514,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. We will now go to the Office of the Clerk, beginning on page 13, with information items up to page 16. Questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I see there is approximately a \$600,000 increase to contract services. Can I have an explanation of what that is for?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll turn this over to Ms. Wickens.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Ms. Wickens.

**MS. WICKENS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. One of the big increases for the Office of the Clerk, particularly with contract services, is interior renos. What we're going to be having is renovations as a result of an increase in staff, so that's approximately estimated at about \$414,000 as well as the board of management has approved the work on the establishment of a monument for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and that's approximately \$75,000.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There is some money to kind of retrofit the current building to allow more office space. Can I get how many staff are we adding to the Office of the Clerk and what those positions are?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll turn this over to Ms. Wickens.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Ms. Wickens.

**MS. WICKENS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We're actually only having an increase of one within the Office of the Clerk. However, as a result, we currently have 24 office spaces within the Office of the Clerk, and we require 30. The increase in office space is just to accommodate our current and new staff coming on.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I see that there are a couple of positions in other areas. What is the one position being added to the Office of the Clerk? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.:** I'll turn this over to Ms. Wickens.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Ms. Wickens.

**MS. WICKENS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The new position is an official languages and public outreach position.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Are there any further questions to the Office of the Clerk? Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just looking at page 15 at the capital area development fund, contribution I see that there was no contribution made in 2019-2020, but \$50,000 for the last year or so. Just curious to know if Mr. Speaker or the Minister could speak to where this money was used and sort of maybe to the efficacy of it, how well it did? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.:** Sorry, I don't have an earpiece here. Could the Member repeat the question, please?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I'll just get you an earpiece, just wait. All right. Can you hear me? Can you repeat your question?

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Sure. That will actually hopefully make me be able to make it clearer. I'm just curious to know a little bit more about the capital area development fund on page 15. I note that there was no money for it in 2019-2020. I think it sounds like a great idea from reading the description. If the Minister could just speak to how that money was used and how efficient it has been used in the capital. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We'll turn this over to Ms. Wickens. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Ms. Wickens.

**MS. WICKENS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee was established in 2021, and that was to having each party -- so this was the committee which includes Members of the Legislative Assembly, the Yellowknife City Council, the RCMP, the Yellowknife Dene, and the Department of National Defence. Each party was contributing \$50,000 to go towards the capital development fund. That is an area that we currently all share. That is the causeway to the city centre. Unfortunately, each party was to contribute \$50,000 to do a monument of sorts in that area. However, this fund actually didn't come to fruition, so the money that's been currently used for that is just to go to general maintenance of the area, which includes snow removal, the flags causeway, and as well as gravel spreading. That's currently right now. We are going to engage conversation again with the committee to see if there is the option of that. Right now, there is no money that is going into that fund.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the clerk responding to what was going to be my next question as to what was going to happen now that that wasn't going to happen. Can someone explain what this monument was for? Is this the one for the missing and murdered Indigenous women? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.:** Thank you. I'll turn this over to Ms. Wickens. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Ms. Wickens.

**MS. WICKENS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. No, the funding was to go towards a large monument or just enhancement of the site itself, but it just never came to fruition.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Any further questions under Office of the Clerk? Seeing none, please turn to page 14. Legislative Assembly, Office of the Clerk, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$9,417,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. We will now turn to the Office of the Speaker, beginning on page 17 with information items up to page 19. Questions? Seeing no questions, please turn to page 18. Legislative Assembly, Office of the Speaker, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$508,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. We will now go to statutory offices, beginning on page 20, with information items on pages 23 and 24. Questions? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I see that there are a few areas of increases, here, and maybe I'll speak with the Ombud office. Can someone explain to me what the increase here is all about? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.:** Thank you. The increase is to the Ombud's compensation and benefits of \$5,000; also, a new intern position at \$58,000. The intern funding will offset costs. Also, an increase to the telecommunication contract of \$13,000, with a reduction in materials and supplies of \$5,000. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. It sounds good to have an intern working with the Ombud. How about the increase in the Language Commissioner office there? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.:** Thank you. I'd like to thank the Member for asking me this question here. We have an increase to the Commissioner's compensation and benefits of \$132,000, also an increase of \$53,000 to move the admin from part-time to full-time. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair, and you're welcome to the Speaker for asking these questions. I have one more, if I could. There is an increase of the director, Human Rights Commission line of about \$200,000, and I'd like to get an explanation there. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The increase of actually \$169,000 is an increase to the executive director compensation and benefits of \$12,000; also a new position. They have had an unfunded intern on staff for two years who carried a full workload. They requested that this position turn into a full-time human rights officer position, increase of \$140,000, also an increase to their travel budget to support a pilot program that they are launching, which will allow two trips per year for the Human Rights Office to visit the five regional centres. The pilot program would have the commission utilize their accumulated contribution to fund the contract community reps in communities outside of Yellowknife, to provide part-time services in restorative human rights education and information to community members. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. No, that all sounds good. Another intern position and increased travel to promote the Human Rights Commission, I'm all happy with that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Any other questions? Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just looking at the active positions on page 23, and I'm just curious to know about the position that is no longer there in the Sahtu. Has that position been moved to the South Slave? Is that one of those positions, or has it been something different? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.:** Thank you. I'll turn this over to Ms. Wickens. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Ms. Wickens.

**MS. WICKENS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In the previous fiscal, we were going to establish the Official Languages Office in the Sahtu, and funding came along with that position. However, since the new Languages Commissioner is now located in Fort Smith, that position has been relocated to there.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Any further questions under the statutory offices? Seeing none, please turn to page 21. Legislative Assembly, statutory office, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$4,047,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Members. Please return now to the departmental summary on page 5. Legislative Assembly, operations expenditures, total department, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$24,443,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of the Legislative Assembly. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the witnesses appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Committee, we will just take a couple of minutes' break just so I can get the next department ready.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021, and Environment and Natural Resources. Does the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources have any opening remarks?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thanks. I do, Madam Chair. I am here to present the 2021-2022 Main Estimates for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$789,000 or 0.8 percent over the Main Estimates 2020-2021. These estimates support the mandate objectives for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources while continuing to meet the GNWT's fiscal objective to prioritize responsible and strategic spending.

Highlights of the proposed estimates for the department include:

- New initiative funding of \$2.711 million, which includes funding for sustainable livelihoods and funding to implement the NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework and action plan;
- Forced growth funding of \$127,000 for increases in air tanker contract costs;
- An additional \$58,000 to administer French language services; and,
- Sunsets of \$1.802 million in funding for completed initiatives related to environmental assessment requirements for the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway, the agriculture strategy, the pan-territorial vision for sustainable development of offshore oil and gas, and planned reduced federal funding for the nature fund agreement and conservation and recovery of the Bathurst and barren-ground caribou herds.

These estimates continue to support the priorities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly by:

- Implementing the NWT climate change strategic framework and action plan to ensure our government makes informed decisions and shows leadership for transitioning away from fossil fuels and building resilience to the effects of climate change;
- Implementing ENR's sustainable livelihoods action plan, including supporting residents and Indigenous governments and organizations with new and modified harvester support programs to increase food security;
- Taking key actions to support the implementation of UNDRIP through the co-management of wildlife, waters and protected areas, and with land-based programming and to ensure Indigenous rights, culture, heritage, language, and traditional knowledge are at the heart of our program and service delivery;
- Building on our efforts to support regional decision-making by establishing management boards for territorial protected areas and working with our partners to develop regional forest management plans; and,
- Increasing employment in small communities through Territorial protected areas, waste reduction and diversion programs, forestry operations, and research and monitoring programs. These programs already support over 800 full-time, part-time and seasonal or casual jobs in small communities and there are opportunities for growth in the future.

That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Does the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources wish to bring witnesses into the House?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Yes, I do.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses for the record?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At the table is Deputy Minister Erin Kelly, as well as director of finance and capital planning, Jessica St. Arnaud.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you and welcome. The committee has agreed to forego general comments. Does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Committee, we will defer the departmental summary and review the estimates by activity summary, beginning with corporate management, beginning on page 72, with information items on page 75. Questions? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. If we can start on page 73. When I look down the program detail line for 2021-2022, all of those items are actually reduction from the previous year except for policy, legislation, and communications. Can someone tell me what's going on here? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. For corporate costs, you see a reduction of \$21,000. Basically, it's amortization adjustment. Then on the directorate, we see a decrease again as amortization, and then, the field support unit, yet again, amortization adjustment. On financial and capital planning, we see it decreased due to a transfer to the FMD South Slave to support historical spending. Number eight is, again, a decrease of \$217,000 due to \$172,000 of community hunter and assistance program, one-time supplemental; \$150,000 sustainable livelihood program, one time supplementary; \$110,000 sustainable livelihood program initiative; and a \$5,000 amortization adjustment.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate that from the Minister. I'm a bit concerned that the

core of ENR is starting to shrivel up again because this is what supports all the other work that the department does. I want to ask: the policy legislation communications line, there's no increase there yet. As I understand it, the department is doing work on the Forestry Act, the Environmental Protection Act, Waters Act, and Protected Areas Act. There's some work being done on regulations as I understand it. Where is the capacity of the department if there's no increased funding to do all of this work? Is it just being done off the sides of people's desks? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In regards to the work, we're very capable of doing it. It's a discussion that we've had, but for further detail with your permission, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. While policy, legislation, and communications provides a support function for legislated development, the majority of the work is done within the divisions for forest management, for example, for the Forest Act or by the conservation group for regulations related to Thaidene Nene and Tu'eyeta, the Waters Act would be the water monitoring and management division, et cetera. There is a lot of capacity within the divisions, and they are supported well by the staff that we do have in the policy, legislation, and communications division. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Just in case anybody gets the wrong idea here, I am not saying that staff are not capable of doing the work. I know that they work very, very hard, and we saw that in the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. I just don't want to kill them with the work like we almost did with what we put onto them at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

On Friday of last week, I can't even remember what day it is anymore, we reviewed the ITI budget, and they had over half a million dollars for a new unit that they had created for implementation of the Mineral Resources Act alone. It was \$360,000 if they could contract work out with, and then they had moved a couple of staff people in there to develop regulations. I'm just astounded that we have one department that takes that approach and other departments don't do the same thing. I know that these folks at ENR work very, very hard, but I am worried that they don't get the support that they need to get the work done. Why has the Minister

not gone to the FMB to get more resources so that they can get the work done in a timely fashion? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. I thank the Member for his passion, and I appreciate the good words he says about ENR. When we talked about this and we looked at our budget and we looked at what our legislation is going to be and our requirements, we feel presently that we can do the work with the different divisions within the department. We are able to achieve that. If we need to, I will not hesitate to come back and ask for more money if we require it, but right now, we feel comfortable that we are able to achieve it in a timely manner within our existing budgets presently. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister, Member.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate the Minister saying that. I pleaded with the previous Minister in the last Assembly to get more resources to get the work done, and I continue to do that. I will probably be here a year from now asking the same question. I want to move on to the Community Harvester Assistance Program. I think this is the place to talk about this. It's kind of hard to know. That program is very effective in terms of building food security. It gets people out on the land doing stuff that they like, and it hasn't been increased for a number of years. We had understood that it was under review. What's the status of the program, and when is there going to be some more money? Is there any new money in this budget for the Community Harvester Assistance Program? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. Before I turn, with your permission, to the deputy minister, we made a commitment to evaluate that. We are in the process of doing that, and we are working on it. We do have a variety of other programs out there on top of CHAP, but I will turn to the deputy minister for details in regard to CHAP. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The review of the CHAP program has begun. I think it's important to recognize that there are a number of programs, not just CHAP, that ENR provides to support this type of activity, and when we went out and did the engagement to develop the Sustainable

Livelihoods Action Plan, there were some concerns that were brought forward related to how that program money was being distributed in communities.

We really want to make sure that we are being as effective as possible and learning what we need to and making sure that those who need the funding are able to access it. We are going to do the review, and based on the outcomes of the review and the other program work that we are doing, we will make a determination of whether there is enough funding or not. We look forward to pulling that information together in the next four months and being able to make some recommendations based on the review. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I recognize there's a pandemic going on, but I asked these questions a year ago because we wanted to try to increase the CHAP funding at that point. Has this review been delayed? When is the Minister going to be in a position where he can share a copy of the evaluation with standing committee? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. For that detail, I will turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This program requires that we speak to the people who are accessing it, and many of the communities post-COVID were not comfortable with those types of meetings and discussions occurring. We are now in a place where we have been able to revamp the program so that we have opportunities digitally but also where communities can meet internally and provide answers to the questions that have been provided. As I mentioned, we are hoping to have a "what we heard" completed with recommendations within the next four months. We recognize the importance of this program, not only to Members of the Legislative Assembly, but also to the residents of the Northwest Territories. That's why we need to make sure that we are doing it right and that there are points where those in communities who are land users and who are harvesters have the ability to provide input into the program review. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. We will make that commitment to get that to committee. We will get that "what we heard" report so the committee is well aware of what we are doing. It's not going to be a hidden document. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Any other questions from committee? Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will just look at page 74. I am looking at the disaster compensation line of just \$15,000. The actuals in 2019 were only \$4,000. Obviously, that would be one that, I am sure, is dependent on what happens in that year. Given the situation that's happened with the high water levels this past year and potential for this situation to occur in the upcoming years, do we anticipate that we are going to actually see more money needed here, or does the department think that any compensation that we provide will come under federal funding? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I will go to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This program is not generally oversubscribed. We know right now that we have already increased the amount of funding that can be accessed for those that experience the very damaging effects of the flood on the Taltson this fall to \$40,000, and we are just finalizing the criteria for that funding at this time. The funding for this is at \$4,500 per recipient. We do realize that there will be more spent on this this year than there has been in previous years. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will make sure I follow up with my colleague to find out if that \$4,500 will be enough for the compensation that some of these trappers may need, just to get a better idea of that. Again, the next question I have is around the fur price program. I probably am a little bit ignorant here, but just in general, with our fur programs, given that the fur auctions are likely not to go ahead or go ahead in a similar manner and that buyers would like to purchase furs that they can actually touch versus doing anything virtually, there is expected to be a decline coming up in fur sales. I'm just wondering: is this the area, or does the department give help to trappers in that

area, and is this going to be where this money would be coming from? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In regard to that program, we actually pay our trappers the rates, and then we do take it down to auction. The Member is correct; it's not right now. They like to be hands-on. We warehouse it. We have a good place to maintain the furs. When we do go to auction, we are able to sell it. If there is an increase in the fur, I think I will actually just go for that detail to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister was saying, we have quite a few programs that help to support harvesters and trappers, and we are actually looking at more. I would definitely mention that the harvester fur auction is anticipating that the April 2021 auction will do better than it has in the past because people are running out of raw inventory materials. That will most likely be furs that are not as expensive because people like to handle the furs when they are more expensive buys, for sure. However, something that we would like to point out is that we are working with ITI to look at different market pathways, working with trappers, processors, artisans, and manufacturers to identify areas for innovation, and we are planning a fur industry round table to try to look at ways to help with revitalization of this industry. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that the deputy minister keeps answering my questions ahead of when I am actually going to ask them. That was going to be my next question. I do recognize there are a lot of different programs here, and I am happy to hear that we are trying to be innovative when it comes to fur and how we can use that for our economy. I am personally trying to do my best to support our arts program and their use of fur. Yes, I would just say more as a comment that I would support more line items increasing in this area. Thank you, Madam Chair. I am done.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. I will take that as a comment. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** No questions.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I put my head down to check out who is next. Are there any other questions? Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just on page 74, the community foods there, I see that, in 2019-2020, it was at \$239,000; then it dropped down in 2021 to \$50,000, and it stayed like that. What was the reason for that? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I would turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The engagement on the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan occurred in that year, so there were 18 community meetings that were held across the Northwest Territories. The amount that we have for ongoing is \$50,000 because we do not need to do the same level of engagement that we did for development of the action plan. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to go to the fur price program, as well. In the news there, I see that there was a bunch of polar bear hides sent back or looking to get sent back into Nunavut. I am just wondering if that is happening here in the territories. Are there furs down south that will be returned to the NWT because they cannot be sold? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Our furs are actually in the North. We keep them here. We take them down to auction. We do not leave them down there. My understanding is we do not leave them down there. Basically, we give the trappers their money up front; then we send it out. As the deputy minister says, April, we are looking that it will be better sales for us. Right now, we are not in the same boat as the Nunavut government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. When the furs go south and I guess because of maybe COVID-related issues and prices are down,

will the trappers be compensated or will there be an increase in their compensation to keep them up to a level of kind of where they have been in the past? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I will turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Because of the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program and the way that it works, there are advances that are made and there are grubstake payments that are made to trappers, so they have already received some funding before the auction happens. This is the reason that the system was built the way that it is, so we kind of have built-in insurance where that is concerned. Obviously, there are ways that we can do things better and with COVID changing the lay of the land where fur is concerned. We are definitely looking into this, and it will be part of the discussions that we have when we look at the innovation opportunities for the industry. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to the fur, is any of it actually sent south and prepared there and brought back to the NWT for use by northern artisans? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I would turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My understanding is: yes, that that does occur. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That is good to know because I usually get people asking me where they can buy fur from. I just want to go to Take a Kid Trapping in case I want to take one of my kids.

---Laughter

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Anyways, can you talk a little bit about that program? I see it went in 2019-2020 from \$48,000 up to \$125,000, so I suspect that is the interest in it since that is what's happening. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I will start, and then I will turn it over to the deputy minister. Take a Kid Trapping is a combination of a couple of departments working together. ENR is the lead on it. We have seen a decline in applications in the previous years, but for the detail of the discrepancy, I am going to turn it to the deputy minister with your permission. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would definitely say that the actuals in that year were lower because of COVID, as well. A lot of the Take a Kid Trapping program happens later on in the spring of the year, and at that point, we were not doing programs like that. However, as the Minister mentioned, there has also been a decrease in applications. I know that the people in our on-the-land unit are hard at work trying to promote this program to make sure that it can be happening in communities in the NWT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will just move to that disaster compensation, as well, and the \$15,000 there. With respect to what happened around the Fort Smith area and that with the trappers because of the high water, I am not sure if that is looked at as a natural disaster or what, but is the department looking at maybe defining what a disaster actually is with respect to trappers? There seemed to be something just in the news, whether it is true or not, that government first came out and said it was not our fault, so I am just not sure if we have any definitions or how we take responsibility for high water or whatever. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. As for the definition, I will probably get the deputy minister to try to give that. It was not the Taltson Dam. That did not cause it. It was Mother Nature, a whole bunch of tributaries, lots of water, lots of snow and rain, so it had an impact on it. We do have a definition that we use, and that there is part of it. For the definition and detail of what we do, I am going to turn to the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Flooding is certainly one of the natural disasters that one can apply for funding under this program for, but there are criteria that are part of that program. For the program at the \$4,500 level, which is the program that is usually available, it has a relationship to 25 percent of your income coming from trapping. With respect to what happened this year on the Taltson, because of the magnitude of effect, it's unprecedented, the amount of damage that happened in that area. We have set up a program specifically for Taltson, and it's up to \$40,000. The criteria are being finalized right now, but they are slightly different to accommodate the situation that we're in at this particular moment in time. Again, that is specific to the Taltson issue, but flooding that happens in other areas of the NWT would be eligible as long as the people meet the criteria, the claim meets the criteria of the fund. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to turn to traditional knowledge. With respect to that fund there, I see that it was \$7,000 in 2019-2020, and it's gone up to \$65,000. I'm just wondering, I would ask how it's used. I see that it says here that it carries out specific wildlife and forestry research. Does that include getting information from elders, picking the knowledge that they have, and if so, is there compensation related to that? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thanks. I'll start, and with your permission, I'll ask you to go to the deputy minister. With the variance there with the \$7,000 to \$65,000, it was actually due to a coding error, payments made out of other contribution lines, so that's what we had there. The traditional knowledge funding helps communities carry out specific projects related to collection of traditional knowledge and many other projects, including traditional knowledge and cultural components. Traditional knowledge contributes to and also ties into other departmental contributions and various activities. For further detail, I'll ask your permission to go to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, when there is traditional knowledge work that's done, if it is work that the department is working with elders

and traditional knowledge holders, there is compensation as part of that. Sometimes, we fund projects where communities work on it on their own. One of the most important things to consider here is this is one line item, but there is funding from most of the different activities in here that goes towards traditional knowledge. This is not the only money that the department has for traditional knowledge projects. Same with country foods, for example, or food security. These are just examples that are under the corporate management item in the main estimates. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Marsi cho, Madam Chair. My colleague there just took a lot of my thunder, but I'm glad these questions were asked. Just hearing this last response, too, it did answer a lot of my questions, but I did have one just a little bit about traditional knowledge. Right across the board, I think for all departments, if there are any sort of areas where there is any sort of research being done, I think this is very important. To give an example, if there is any sort of scientific study, I think it's so important to have somebody who is really knowledgeable about the land; it could be an elder, it could be a long-term land user, knowledge keepers. It's a good marriage between science and some of the old ways.

When you have a scientist going out on the land studying water levels, for example, it's always good to go out and take somebody who knows the land. Nobody knows the land better than a lot of our locals in the area, in the North. They have a good pulse. They know every rock formation, what the history is of a certain area of land, and it's just valuable. To me, that's more valuable than any sort of PhD, when I'm talking about a lot of traditional knowledge and the knowledge keepers, so I'm hoping this funding amount here can really be looked at. I'm just wondering because I looked through the entire department and this is the only place I've seen traditional knowledge: are there any other areas where this is spoken to? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I'll start, then, with your permission, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Traditional knowledge, local knowledge, and scientific knowledge is very much what ENR is about. When we do things, we always tap into our traditional and our local knowledge because it helps our scientists. If you look at caribou, we deal with our elders, we talk to our elders, we meet with elders because, basically, they are our foundation moving forward. They are very knowledgeable and

help us do things. For the detail that you're looking for in other areas, I will, with your permission, go to the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I'll start by answering that it may not say "traditional knowledge" in there; what it would say is that we have funding to do work on caribou, for example, or moose or water, and we would be doing that work collaboratively with Indigenous governments. A good example of that would be some of the work that we've done in the past on the Slave River and Delta partnership that involved the communities of Fort Smith and Fort Resolution, where we had scientists and traditional knowledge holders and elders in the same room and we actually have some elders who are co-authors on scientific papers because they worked so closely together. What we term that as is "knowledge co-production," where they are actually creating new knowledge by linking the science and traditional knowledge in communities. That's our gold standard. We're not there on all of the projects that we do, obviously, but we do our best to include traditional knowledge wherever we can for the reasons that the Member brought forward. I would also point out that our knowledge agenda has traditional knowledge as a cross-cutting theme, so we try to look to include it wherever we can with the research that we're doing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for that response. It's good to hear because I'm just trying to understand that specific earmark there for traditional knowledge, so thank you for that response. One other item here that kind of got my attention was the country foods. The actuals were \$239,000, and now it's down to \$50,000. Is this being reallocated someplace else? Is this country foods being spoken to somewhere else in this section? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The reason that it was \$239,000 was because we did the engagement for the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan that year, and we held meetings in 18 different communities across the Northwest Territories. We don't require that level of engagement any longer,

so the funding is now \$50,000. However, as I've mentioned previously, there is money for country foods in other areas in the budget, as well, that contribute to that, particularly to food security. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Marsi cho, Madam Chair. Thank you for that. Speaking to country foods, again. What other work is being done for studies in terms of this area? Is there anything ongoing right at this moment? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There are a number of initiatives that are being done by our on-land unit that integrate food security into them, particularly related to the implementation of the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan, and I would definitely say that there are other projects that are being done by the Fish and Wildlife Division, as well, caribou projects where we're looking at the relationship with food security. Some of the projects that we do on alternate harvest when caribou aren't available, so moose and fish and other food sources. This is an emerging issue that continues. We continue to look for ways to do work on this item, so I would definitely say that there is other work that will be done. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you for that. One last question: the local wildlife committees here. The actuals were \$109,000, and now it's \$257,000. My question is: was this due to demand? In terms of subscriptions of this line, I want to know more detail about that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. If you have a look at the Community Harvester Assistance Program line item, you can see that it's a little bit larger in that year and that the local wildlife

committee is a little bit smaller. It's because they're generally on the same contribution agreements, and they end up being coded to either of those items. It's not that there's been any reduction. It's just how the money is flowed to communities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Are there any other questions under corporate management? Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to turn to page 74. I just want to make a general statement first. Page 74 has a lot to do with traditional lifestyle. Traditional lifestyle of Aboriginal people is extremely important. I've sat here for two times now, and there hasn't been any increases in the CHAP program, which is really important to an Aboriginal organization. I know that, when I was at Salt River and Chief of Salt River, we were always asking for increases to some of these areas. The CHAP program is also very beneficial to the Metis Nation and all Indigenous people across the North.

It seems like everything on this page has got to do with traditional lifestyles, and we do all these plans and strategies that cost us quite a bit of money. When you look at some of these lines and \$50,000 to do a country food strategy and a plan to do sustainable livelihoods and an action plan, these dollars should be going to the actual groups that actually benefit from these programs. I find that so many times in government and programs that affect Indigenous or Aboriginal people, we always have to be, there's always a plan and a strategy with almost every department here anyways. When you only have \$50,000, put it in with the CHAP program and at least you know it's going to the individuals in those programs. I mean how much study can we do with such little money? I just don't understand how things are sometimes done. If you were in business, they would never be able to make it. When you make business decisions, you don't do things this way. Everything's got to be studied, an action plan, a strategy. Doesn't anybody in the department actually make decisions? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. Yes, we make decisions. We think outside the box sometimes. We try to be as creative as we can, but most importantly, we work with our Indigenous governments. We need to work with them. With ENR, we have co-management. We work with them. For the \$50,000 and that request, I would have to turn to the deputy minister for further detail. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. All of the monies that are on page 74 are grants and contributions, which means that they're going out to communities or other organizations. The \$50,000 for country foods is going to communities for country food work to help to ultimately develop the strategy, but we develop those in collaboration with other communities. I would also like to point out that there have been additional funds provided towards similar programs than CHAP. We're doing a review of CHAP at this particular moment in time, but this year, we did a take a family on the land program with \$50,000 going out to families to get on the land. We did a regional harvesting training and mentorship support program. The funding allocated was \$260,000 for a COVID harvesting subsidy as well as community training and knowledge exchange programs.

The reason that we did this is because, when we engaged with communities on CHAP, they said that there were some issues that needed to be resolved, and they told us the type of funding that they would like us put out. It's things like take a family on the land, COVID harvesting subsidies, community training and knowledge exchange programs. We're also working on a trappers' support program pilot with several communities, as well, because they said that that was what they would like us to put some funding into. I'm sure, once we've done the review of CHAP, we'll come back with recommendations, and as we've already committed to, the Minister committed to, we'll share those recommendations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Ms. Kelly. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm glad that the Minister said he'll start thinking out of the box because someone's got to start thinking out of the box. I know that, when I was in other leadership, that was one of the biggest concerns was that CHAP program, and I think many times even in discussions, even in the last business plan that we did, we wanted an increase to the CHAP program and some of these other programs that affect the people that believe in the traditional lifestyle. That's most of us in the territory and especially small communities and regional centres.

I find that the funding is lacking in this area, and I want to know when we're going to look at this very seriously to increase the funding because traditional lifestyle is extremely important to the Indigenous people of the Northwest Territories, all people, and increases -- I've been looking at this CHAP program for, well, it's been 14 years now since I've been in leadership. It's always the same.

We've always got the same amount with no increases. I just want to know when the increases are going to come into effect for page 74? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We're not going to put increases just to put increases in. We've made a commitment to our IGC's, our co-management partners, our communities to look at this CHAP program. We've started the process. We've made a commitment to have it done in four months, and we're bringing it to committee. If we find that we need to have an increase, then that's when we come back. Right now, we have as the deputy minister has said, we've identified other issues that communities wanted, and we started those programs now. That funding there has been part of our consultation, part of our work with them, but for further details, I'd like to go to the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to point out that, although the CHAP line item is staying the same because we're doing the review, there have been new programs available to get people out on the land and to practice traditional economy. Take a family on the land, there was \$50,000 that was put towards that, and \$260,000 towards COVID harvesting subsidies and community training and knowledge exchange programs. That funding was made available this year for Indigenous governments to apply for, and it was fully subscribed. These are programs, as I mentioned, that Indigenous governments told us during the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan development that they wanted this type of work done. There has been some new programs out there that Indigenous governments are able to access, and we look forward to being able to come back with the results of the CHAP review. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Madam Chair, I just want to thank the Minister for thinking out of the box. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Are there any further questions? I'm going to take a short recess here, then, and we'll resume with the same activity.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I will now call the Committee of the Whole back to order, and we are still on Environment and Natural Resources, corporate management. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I hear what the Minister says about not adding money to the Community Harvester Assistance Program for the sake of not adding money, but I do not see this as simply adding money. I see it as adding money to add food for people who are struggling, and so I do see a direct correlation there. Just to support my colleagues and their words, I do support an increase of funding to this because I think it goes directly to people. That being said, I do have people who partake in traditional economy in the constituency that I serve, including trapping and hunting, and a lot of the assistance that did come through, especially from the federal government and through the GNWT went directly to Indigenous governments. I am wondering if there is any relief that is available directly to hunters and trappers and if there is a line item here where they can apply directly to ENR for funding relief. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. My understanding is that we give it to the Indigenous governments and they then work with their membership to get it. For clarity, I am going to turn to the deputy minister, if there is a pot of money that I am not aware of. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That is my understanding, as well, and this is one of the reasons that we want to do a review of the CHAP program because there are items like this and others that were brought forward during our review, where people have expressed concerns about process and how that works and also that they would like to have funding for different elements, like we mentioned, in the take a family on the land and regional harvesting, training, and mentorship support programs, which provided harvesting subsidies and the community training and knowledge exchange programs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. While this review is taking place and given that there is a lot of support for increasing the amount of funding to the CHAP program on this side of the House, is the Minister willing to look at

increasing funding for an access point where hunters and trappers who are kind of falling into the gaps and not receiving funding through different organizations are able to go directly to ENR in order to get relief in order for them to continue partaking in traditional hunting and trapping and traditional economy? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hate to say it, no. Not right now. We need to do what we said we were going to do. We need to work on it. We encourage people to reach out to their Indigenous governments to get access to the programs. If we're going to increase it, then we would have to look at increasing it for our Indigenous governments that we do use the money for. If there is an opportunity for this, I'm going to ask the deputy minister to clarify if there is an opportunity, then we can talk about it. Right now, I don't see that opportunity available. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** There is no opportunity at this time. There is an opportunity for people to participate in the CHAP review and bring forward their concerns or considerations, certainly. For clarity, there are additional funds that are being put towards traditional economy and on-the-land activities that are not CHAP funds. Those programs are take a family on the land and the regional harvesting, training, and mentorship support programs. There will be a trapper support program pilot coming out because we've listened to communities and Indigenous governments through the development of the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan, and those are the areas that they said that they would like additional funds. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. No. I am keen to hear more about the trapper support pilot program that is going to be coming out. I definitely support the take a family on the land program and the Take a Kid Trapping program. I find that people in the constituency I serve run into the same type of thing where, for example, with the Take a Kid Trapping program, it's an application process that generally comes from a school board, say. The school puts together the application, it goes through, they decide who to hire. I can think of a particular person who lives two minutes down the road from me who is great with kids, who has really invested in traditional economy, and I also happen to have a child who is

very interested in learning trapping and hunting. I am not a trapper. I am not the person to take my child and teach them how to trap, but I think that it is great when our younger generations want to partake. I have a nephew who would love to be able to learn traditional economy and be involved in his own culture and have the opportunity to learn, but the trapper and hunter who lives two minutes down the road does not have the opportunity to seek out funding to be able to get kids involved on their own, outside of the school. I'm wondering if within the review that will be taken into consideration so that, especially in our regional centres, especially in Yellowknife, people are able to take advantage without being associated with a particular organization. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. As the deputy minister said, this is an opportunity to look at things. I would encourage yourself and the other individual that is down the street to be part of the evaluation, to talk to us. Get that feedback in there because, again, we need to get as much information as we can to make an informed decision on how we can improve the programs that we have or add new programs. Again, at the end of the day, it's about consultation, working with people, and people needing to provide their feedback as best they can to us. They can reach out to maybe the North Slave office, talk to them as well as yourself. You can bring their ideas forward. We would look at those things. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Last question: what is the deadline that the Minister is working toward to have the CHAP program and the associated programs completely reviewed and kind of fresh and ready to go? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Completely reviewed within the next four months, that's what we are trying to do. We're trying to have that done, completed, then we will bring that "what we heard" report back to committee. We're looking at a four month from around this time to have it completed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake, anything further? All right, Members, if there are no further questions, please turn to page 73. Environment and Natural

Resources, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$14,547,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. I will now move onto environmental protection and waste management, beginning on page 76, with information items on page 78. Questions? Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I want to start with waste reduction. I see that the line item for 2021-2022 under waste reduction has sunset. I'm wondering if the Minister can let us know the reasoning for that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. That was our agricultural strategic implementation. It was sunsetted. Work has been sustainable. Basically, it has been completed at this point, so we don't need that funding. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. There was a waste management strategy that was published in the fall of 2019, I believe. I'm wondering what has been achieved under that strategy to date. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There have been a number of items that have been moved forward on the waste resource management strategy. That strategy is funded from the environment fund, so it's not in this line item. To be honest with you, I can't come up with specifics at this particular moment in time. We are moving along, and we are on target for the action items that are within that waste resource management strategy that we implement with MACA. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I will come back during the environment fund then and ask about the waste management strategy. With that in mind, I'm going to flip to

contaminated sites. There is currently \$339,000 allocated to contaminated sites. My concern with that is that is millions of dollars sitting within the federal government for remediating contaminated sites. Is this the area where the GNWT would be working to access those millions of dollars to be able to remediate the sites and get Northerners to work? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I would turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The money that is here is for the positions that the department has and the small amount of O and M. There is an environmental liabilities fund for both Giant and, as well, for the whole of government that funds the actual remediation of contaminated sites that finances holds that we work with them on. Right now, our work on contaminated sites is we have an approach to contaminated sites management, and we're developing the policies and procedures under it. We've just finished a jurisdictional scan and are working with multiple departments to determine how we're going to address any gaps or information that we've received through that jurisdictional scan. Our plan is to share it with committee once it has been complete. Our hope is to be able to do that in the near term. With respect to the federal government, my understanding is that Industry, Tourism and Investment has written to the federal government, and we were part of reviewing that response. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. This relates back to the conversation that was had during the corporate management section, so I think I know the answer I'm going to get. Given the focus that this government would like to put onto remediation and a remediation economy, does the Minister feel that the division is adequately staffed, or is this one of those ones where, in order to really get dollars flowing from the federal government along with ITI, there is a need for additional resources to get that done? Or is this division also properly staffed? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. While there are positions that work on contaminated sites that are reflected here because it's part of the departmental budget, there are also positions that work on this at ENR right now that are funded out of the Environmental Liability Fund because of the relationship that I mentioned that we have. We feel that, right now, we have the staff that we need. We are completing the jurisdictional scan to look at what the gaps are and what policies and procedures we need to develop, and we will definitely be doing an assessment of our capacity related to that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In regard to the accepted waste sites, the ones that we still have negotiate for devolution, is that the responsibility of this group? Who is responsible for those sites and negotiating whether they are federal or GNWT sites? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This group is involved in the negotiations with the Department of Lands and has conducted the work on these sites up to this point, doing the ESAs, for example. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to echo some of the comments made by my other colleagues. I think there is a need for probably a larger review of who is doing that work, whether it's ITI, ENR, or Lands. I know that the Ptarmigan Mine, the Tom Mine, those federal sites up the Ingraham Trail, there are millions of dollars that the YKDFN is trying to go get out of the going forward as we speak, and the fact that we're not sure whether they're GNWT or Canada sites is a huge barrier to that. I'm saying that to all three Ministers at once who are responsible for this. Can I get an update on when we expect to see the Environmental Protection Act?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** First, I'll just start. In regard to the six sites, we've got a negotiating mandate from the government, from Cabinet. We are now reaching out to the federal government. We're working on that, so that is good news. In regard to when we're going to get the act or the legislation in place, with your permission, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Amendments to the Waters Act and the Environmental Protection Act are dependent on completion of the GNWT's review of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. Once that is complete, we are ready to go on those amendments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The department's four-year business plan says that the Waters Act will be introduced in quarter four of this fiscal, along with the Environmental Protection Act. Can I just get clarification that that is not actually the case? We will not be introducing those as per the business plan because we are waiting to see what happens with the MVRMA negotiations? Is that what I just heard? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** [Microphone turned off]

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Can I get clarification, as ENR is the department I ask questions of, on what's going on with the MVRMA negotiations then? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** That would be EIA. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Madam Chair, I show some frustration on that. The department has done a lot of work on the EPA and the Waters Act and has spent thousands of dollars working with Indigenous governments and stakeholders. It's in the business plan, and I'm now hearing that we're waiting on the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, which operates on federal timelines. Is that also the

case for the Air regulations, that we will then have to delay the Air regulations pending the MVRMA?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We need to do work on the EPA and the Waters Act to determine where Air Regulations ultimately reside. The EPA is not a co-management piece of legislation, while the Waters Act is, and there are questions about how we do the ER regulations. We are in discussions with the land and water boards about how that will work. I would say that part of the reason for waiting to do this until after the MVRMA review has been done is that we don't want to overtax Indigenous governments with so many legislative projects to work on, so we are awaiting the results of the review of the MVRMA. It's not like we're not doing some work in the background to make sure that we're prepared. We will move on the EPA and the Waters Act as soon as that work is completed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I just clarify? I understand that the waste reduction was only \$200,000 and it has sunsetted, but does that now mean, can I get clarification, that this Environmental Protection Unit here is responsible for all of the implementation under the waste reduction strategy? I forget what it is. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just trying to figure out who is doing the waste reduction work now if it's not that unit. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Waste Reduction Unit is still there. They are funded through the environment fund, and they are the group that will be implementing the Waste Resource Management Strategy. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry. I misunderstood that a little earlier, how exactly those positions get started. I see there are 23 staff here, but how many are actually working on the Waste Reduction Unit? I just want to get a sense of how well we're funding this. The Waste Resource Management Strategy is great; it has the potential to save us lots of money in making sure that, when we have to track how much it costs to put all of our buildings into landfills, we are doing that properly. I just want to get a sense of how many staff are actually in the Waste Reduction Unit to do that work. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Seven. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm looking at page 77 and, in particular, the Taiga Environmental Laboratory line item. The government is going to spend \$2 million there this upcoming year, but when you look at the revenues, it only brings in \$712,000 in revenues. While I understand that the lab does other things besides taking in samples from the private sector, there is concern about the lab testing itself and being the watchdog of its own projects. Has there been any look at Taiga laboratory to see whether or not it's still viable to have the laboratory, or would it be better off to use this money to fund Indigenous businesses, other northern businesses, create business opportunities outside of the government? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I'll start, and then I'll turn to the deputy minister. We need Taiga labs. It's very important. I know the Member may not agree with me; we've had conversations about that, and I respect her opinion. When we're looking at the opportunity, it's about serving the people of the Northwest Territories, whether it's businesses or communities. The quick turnaround when we get things done, sometimes it's quicker doing it, but for detail on the rationale, why we still need to keep Taiga labs, I will turn it to the deputy minister, with your permission. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In my opinion, the lab is an essential service. That lab does water testing for drinking water sources in the NWT but also in Western Nunavut. Samples that

would not last, they kind of expire, you could say, they need to be done in a certain amount of time, and they cannot be sent down south. As the Member pointed out, there really is not a business case for the lab; it loses money, so what we are doing is making sure that we have the ability to do this sampling that communities need. There are some short-term sampling for projects like Giant Mine that have to be done within a certain amount of time, and they can't be sent down south. I think that the lab has shown its versatility in the work that it is doing on COVID waste-water testing as well as the amount of hand sanitizer that was produced in the lab when we had that shortage there, for use by government departments and those who work for the government who were on the front lines there. Clearly, the work on water sampling and the sampling itself is not a viable business. My understanding from looking into this further is that some communities in the South have lost their labs that are far larger than Yellowknife because they could not make it a viable business. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I do understand what the Minister and the deputy minister are saying. I actually do not recall ever having a conversation with the Minister about Taiga lab and my opinion on it, so I would like to just put that on the record. Whereas the ability to do short-term turnaround testing, there are other labs in town that do have the ability to do testing in town. I do understand that Taiga owns a specific piece of equipment, but it's not to say that others could not own that piece of equipment and such. As well, the sanitizer and the waste-water sampling could have been done by businesses in the Northwest Territories. In fact, our own departments and government competed with a local business. That business had to apply to get their sanitizer approved by our government in order to sell it after they went into production, and then Taiga went in after them. While I do appreciate that it is good to have in-town services, there is also an appearance that was always commented on about Giant Mine and sampling and testing yourselves. That piece of equipment given to an Indigenous organization, they could be running that. It could be private; it could be arm's length. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you for the comment.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Any further questions? All right. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I would like to start with the waste reduction line here. My colleague from Kam Lake asked some questions, and we found out it was for some work on the agricultural waste. Are there some studies or reports or anything that came out of this work that the Minister can share with this side of the House and, perhaps even better, the public? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For the detail, I will go to the deputy minister, and then you can come back to me. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The agricultural waste management framework report was developed, and that identified potential regulatory gaps in the NWT based on the related controls in place in other jurisdictions across Canada. The department provided recommendations to ITI, which is the lead on agriculture, for gaps to be addressed. There was also a draft of the NWT composting facility standards that is ready for review by experts and then stakeholders. Preliminary work has been completed on NWT agricultural waste guidelines, and a first draft of these guidelines will be completed in the spring of 2021 for review by ENR. Following this, ENR will engage with stakeholders for input prior to finalization of the guidelines. With respect to sharing with committee, I see no problem with sharing that information with committee. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. Yes, the deputy minister said yes. I was going to say yes, but it's okay. She got ahead of me, so it's all good.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** All right. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I am not going to say anything on that one, but I appreciate the commitment to share that information with us. Let's just go back to: my colleague from Yellowknife North was asking some questions about the legislative work of the department. I was in the last Assembly. We actually saw draft Air Regulations, the wording of it. They were shared with committee. There was a lot of work done on that, and then it just kind of disappeared. I know that there was a lot of work that was done on changes to the Water Resources Act. I talked to some colleagues with Indigenous

governments and the NGO community. They were engaged and involved in workshops and presentations, and then it just never happened. Now I am hearing that somehow all of that effort in the last Assembly is being put aside because we have to wait for something to happen with the MVRMA. I just don't get this. What are we waiting for with regard to the MVRMA? Clearly, GNWT has delegated authority now to sign off water licences, to deal with environmental assessments. What else do we need or want to allow us to do the work on the Environmental Protection Act and on the Waters Act? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** To the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As I mentioned before, this is related to Indigenous capacity to participate in legislative initiatives, and the work on the MVRMA is going first. Once there is room for Indigenous government capacity to take part in continuing the work, as the Member has stated, there has been a lot of work done on this, we will continue our work on the Waters Act and on the EPA. With respect to the Air Regulations, when we went out and got input on the regulations, the number one question was where they were going to sit within the co-management system or within the Environmental Protection Act. We still need to resolve that question, and we are working with the land and water boards with that, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Yes. Thanks, Madam Chair. This may not be the best forum to do this, but I keep asking: what is it that we want out of the MVRMA? Do we want to be able to take it over and change it willy-nilly? There is very limited scope in terms of changing what is in the MVRMA because it is already defined in the land rights agreements. The MVRMA is just simply the legislation that has been passed by the federal government to implement the lands and resources agreements that are already in place, so I just can't for the life of me figure out what GNWT is doing to try to get control of it. If I was an Indigenous government, I would be very, very wary of giving GNWT control over the MVRMA. That would probably be the last thing I would ever want to do. I would rather have it stay with the federal government, quite frankly. I just cannot figure out what we need to do with the MVRMA that stops this other work from proceeding.

Maybe somebody else can take a crack at it. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to again turn to the deputy minister to try to answer the question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The review of the MVRMA and discussions on the MVRMA are an EIA lead. To be honest, at the end of the last Assembly, there was a discussion with Indigenous governments that took part in the partnership drafting approach and other approaches that were completed, and one of the things that the Indigenous governments said was that it was too much and that it was a drain on capacity. What's happened here is that we have heard the Indigenous governments through that review. The work on the MVRMA is happening first, and once there's Indigenous capacity available and that's completed, we are committed to working on the Environmental Protection Act and the Waters Act and looking at where air fits in there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. It has been a long day, and I am just not getting it. I look forward, though, to this side of the House, the public, actually having a better understanding of what GNWT is trying to do to get control of the MVRMA. I just don't get it, and it's not been made clear; it's not been made public. I am really worried about that. I am going to leave it at that. Thanks, Madam Chair. Nothing further on this section.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Are there any further questions under the environmental protection and waste management? Seeing none, please go to page 77. Environment and Natural Resources, environmental protection and waste management, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$4,255,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Committee, we will now go to environmental stewardship and climate change, beginning on page 79, with information items on page 82. Questions? Any questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am looking at page 82. Can I just get clarification on what the three positions that were added to the environmental stewardship and climate change unit are?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I will turn to the deputy minister.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. A senior climate specialist, a climate change adaptation programs manager, and a climate data scientist. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I seem to recall there was an announcement of a number of positions across the GNWT in regard to this. Can I just get a clarification of whether there was any federal funding attached to those, and if so, how much?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. There was no federal money attached to it. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I get a bit of a clarification on what exactly the knowledge agenda is? I believe I have asked this before. There's \$233,000 here, but does this have any relation to the work being done to implement a knowledge economy? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I will turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The knowledge agenda used to be the science agenda, and then it was updated to become the knowledge agenda because we wanted to be looking more broadly than just at science. We plan on releasing the first knowledge agenda action plan next session. In the action plan that we have, a total of 18 of the 19 key actions outlined are short-term deliverables, and 18 are completed or in progress. Basically, what this is is a look at what research we

need to do as a government. It's a compiled document that we can go to universities or other academic institutions and the federal government, and it highlights what our research needs are. What I would say is it is a support to the knowledge economy piece, and it is a major pillar of that, I would even go so far as saying. It's our people that work on the knowledge agenda are heavily involved in the knowledge economy conversation with ITI. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I see that there is about a \$800,000, I'm doing math on the fly, decrease to conservation planning and implementation, looking at page 80, from \$5,263,000 to \$4,400,000. Can I just get a bit of an explanation of why we are decreasing our funding for conservation planning and implementation? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. It's due to the reduction of the federal nature fund funding in year three as compared to year two. The GNWT requested reduced federal funding for years three and four as the protected areas transition from more expensive establishment activities to implementation and management plans. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am looking at the corresponding nature fund protected areas, \$1.9 million, and I heard the Minister say there that there was a decrease in federal funding. Can I get an understanding of how much of that \$2 million for nature fund protected areas is not GNWT money? I don't know if it's all federal, but it's not necessarily all our money. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I will turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The nature fund money is a portion of the conservation planning and implementation funds. The way that it works is that we put forward an application for what we would need over the five-year period. It varied among years. While it can seem like it looks like a reduction, it's actually the funding is less for that

year's work than what it was the year before. As the Minister mentioned, that often happens when you go from the negotiations and the establishment agreement discussions because there were so many meetings and a lot of engagement to working together collaboratively with Indigenous governments on the management. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I get some information on this \$25,000 for adaptation plans? It seems to be lacking a little bit in that there is no shortage of work to be done to make sure all of our communities and regional governments are prepared for climate change adaptation. Can I get some information on this fund and whether we plan to increase it? Is it subscribed to every year? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. On these pages that are grants and contributions, this is the funding that is being given out to communities. Often, there is more being given out to communities from different areas in the department. If we are working on adaptation related to wildlife, there could be funding that is coming from that group. If we are working on adaptation from another division, they could be providing funding. This is what's under this group for adaptation, and it's money that is going out to communities. It doesn't mean that there isn't money, and in this case, there is money in that unit itself to support community adaptation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just looking at page 81, a couple of line items here: IRMA and nature fund protected areas. I'm just looking at the description here. It's the assistance for Indigenous communities in unsettled land claims to participate in land and resource management processes. My question for the Minister here is: which communities are they referring to in this line item? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For that detail, I will turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Acho Dene Koe First Nation, Akaitcho First Nations, Deh Gah Got'ie First Nations, Dehcho First Nations, Deninu Kue First Nation, Fort Providence Metis Council, Fort Resolution Metis Council, Fort Simpson Metis Nation, Fort Smith Metis Council, Hay River Metis Government Council, Jean Marie River First Nation, Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation, K'atlodeeche First Nation, Lidlii Kue First Nation, Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation, Nahanni Butte Dene Band, North Slave Metis Alliance, NWT Metis Nation, Pedzeh Ki First Nation, Sambaa K'e First Nation, West Point First Nation, and Yellowknives Dene First Nation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for that list. Maybe this might be a taller ask, but when will we get a breakdown of what each organization gets just to have an idea? My other question is: just going back through the years here, has this been prescribed properly? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. Yes, we will be able to share it. I would assume that it's been managed properly. It's been looked after properly, but for clarity, I will ask the deputy minister to provide further information. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is a program that came over with devolution, and our department has done a program review early on and has meetings annually to work with these communities on how the distribution occurs. I would definitely say that there's been a lot of discussion and input into this program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is good to know. Like I say, hopefully, in the future, we will see some of the list that you gave me settle their land claims, and we'll go that route. Good. Moving along, nature fund protected areas, there are three protected areas here. Again, I'd like to know what the breakdown is for that \$1.9 million? Marsi cho.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I would turn to the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For clarification, is the question, who the money is going to? Fort Resolution, Yellowknife, Fort Good Hope, Lutselk'e, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories Metis Nation, Wilfred Laurier University, Yamoga Land Corporation in Fort Good Hope, and the Yellowknives Dene First Nation in Yellowknife. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you for that response. My other question is: what is the split between the three protected areas in terms of this budget line item? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I'll go to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That's a little bit of a challenging question because there's nature funds, money that comes to the GNWT that is distributed to the communities. The communities also get nature fund money themselves. The split, the way that it is looking with the GNWT funding and the Government of Canada funding is \$1.137 million for Tsude Niline Tuyeta and \$1.282 million for Thaidene Nene and \$619,000 for Dinaga Wek'ehodi. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for that. I don't have any other questions on this section. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Members, we're going to take a recess, and we'll resume on the same activity.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we were on Environment and Natural Resources, environmental stewardship and climate change. Are

there any questions? We've gone through Yellowknife North and Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Are there any questions from Members under this section? Seeing none, please go to page 80. Environment and Natural Resources, environmental stewardship and climate change, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$14,638,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBER:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. We will now go to forest management beginning on page 83 with information items on page 86. Questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I get an update on where the forest act is?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have issued an invitation to IGCS members to participate in the development of the forest act in accordance with the new IGC legislative protocol. Numerous IGC members have indicated their interest. Our next step is to have a technical briefing this month with interested IGCS members, after which the timeline and technical working group structure will be determined to move forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Glad to hear that it's not dependent on the MVRMA. I recognize that we have developed a new IGCS protocol and we're trying to honour our commitment to a co-drafting process, and I'm happy to hear that. Can I just get an update on whether we expect that to change the timeline for introduction as in the business plan? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We are hopeful that it will not change the introduction timeline, but respectfully, we will leave that to once we have had those discussions with the IGCS and

have developed the timeline and workplan. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I just get a little bit of an explanation of what is going on with the fire operations suppression budget here, noting that it was \$14 million, then \$18 million, then \$22 million, and now back down to \$18 million. Is this just the nature of it's hard to predict how much fire suppression we need or what that \$4 million is? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I will turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. 2019-2020 was not a bad fire year which is the reason that the numbers are lower in the 2019-2020 actuals. The revised estimates, you'll notice the \$22 million, this was due to some additional funding the department was provided with because of COVID issues. We wanted to make sure that we were able to address concerns with how we were going to fight fires and make sure that we were able to protect the people and the property and the environment of the NWT. We were really concerned about having to bring in firefighters from outside the territory, so we put forward a request for funding for multiple initiatives to make sure that we would be able to remain as COVID compliant as possible. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I get an update on whether we are doing any replanting or forest planting? I know this has been a bit of a debate in the NWT, but I also know that there is lots of federal money out there for forestry initiatives. Do we currently have any money in this budget for replanting? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. For that detail, to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There has been some work done on the efficacy of planting and natural regeneration has been supported, but there are some areas where we are doing some research work. We have some additional funding

from the federal government to look into this. It was pushed back because of COVID because there are challenges with tree planting and COVID, but we are definitely still working towards the outcomes of that, that research work. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There has been a lot of talk about biomass and a lot of questions to Infrastructure previously and different departments. As part of that kind of longer-term vision is the idea of communities developing their own, whether it is cord wood or wood chips and kind of these community wood lots, can I just get a sense of whether forest management has any role in that work or money in that budget for that type of work or whether that is a question best left to the biomass people? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. For that detail, I will turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that there are aspects, as the Member has pointed out, that are related to Infrastructure, but I would highlight that our forest management division has a group that is actively working on forest industry development and is in contact with many communities in the NWT and working on projects with them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a question on page 89, the Water Strategy Action Plan: where are we at with the upstream of this with – oh. Too far ahead? Okay. Let's go to that section. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Okay. Are there any questions from Members under the forest management? Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am not sure, but is this the section where I can ask about, I guess it is there, industry development. I see \$50,000 there. What is that actually for? Is that for looking at harvesting and different development in that area? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Can the Member tell me what page he is on?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Page 85.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Sorry. My understanding, if it's on industry development -- correct? Yes. It's my understanding we saw some work, various saw mills like in Jean Marie River right now and the pellet centres, and then we received a supplemental appropriation for fire smarting, as well. Thank you. I think I have answered two questions there with one answer.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just look at that \$50,000 number there, and I take a look at harvesting in the Northwest Territories. There is not a lot of it. It's mostly out of Hay River with a company there and maybe someone in the smaller communities. Is there any appetite to push industry development a little bit more and throw some more money at that initiative? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I will turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have been working with many communities on the projects that you have been discussing at kind of the level of the saw mill or that type of thing, but we have also been working with Timberworks and Digga, who are companies under the forest management agreement, to develop relationships with Aurora Wood Pellets in Enterprise. That is a major project we have been working on for many years with Indigenous governments. We are open to those conversations, and we are actively working with communities on these types of projects. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, and it's community driven. Like I said, Jean Marie, they are looking at doing this, as well, so they have reached out to our staff and are working with them to try to come up with a plan. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, the \$50,000 there, if you spread it out

amongst a few communities, it does not go far, so where does most of that \$50,000 go? Is it one specific community, the major portion of it? Is it all subscribed to, as well? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For detail, I will go to the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As you can see here, there is \$50,000, but the actuals are \$128,000. There is more money that is going towards this industry development than what is in these grants and contribution line items. For this, I don't have the specifics in front of me of what is going to what. There are several small contribution agreements with communities to look at opportunities for saw mills, for example, and there has been in the past many years that we have worked in communities, particularly Fort Resolution and Fort Providence, on a number of funding initiatives to help support the development of businesses under the forest management agreements. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just looking at the industry there, it seems like we have not made a lot of headway. Maybe I am wrong, but I think over the number of years we have been kind of looking at forestry-type businesses that we really have not done a lot. I understand it's community driven, so I am not sure if we can do more or not. Anyways, I just want to go to page 84. Under contract services at \$17,779,000, what does that entail, and where does that go? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Sorry. For that detail, I will ask the deputy minister to answer that question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Those would be things like aviation and air tanker contracts; firefighters, the negotiated contracts, pre-suppression contracts; and aircraft maintenance contracts. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member? Are there any other questions under forest management? Seeing none, I will get Members to go to page 84. Environment and Natural Resources, forest management, operations

expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$38,498,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Committee, now we will go to water management and monitoring, beginning on page 87, with information on page 90. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regard to the water strategy action plan, with the up-river sites for checking them for contaminants and what's coming, flowing down the river, how many of those sites do we have open now, and are still half of them shut down due to COVID-19 restrictions? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I will turn to the deputy minister.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There were more stations where the monitoring was occurring. Then I believe it was in January or February, there were travel restrictions that were put in place. The Environment Canada staff who do the sampling at those sites near the oil sands are in Saskatchewan, so they were unable to travel to do the sampling. In discussions with the Alberta government, they are continuing to do their long-term monitoring, and they agreed to do key stations; 27<sup>th</sup> baseline Athabasca is one of them. It's the long-term monitoring station, and they are doing that one, as well. We can make sure that we are maintaining a monitoring record. Then, as soon as the travel restrictions due to COVID have stopped, they will be coming back to do more sites than what they are doing right now. There are some sites that are closer to the NWT that are in Alberta that are being done out of Yellowknife by Environment Canada, so there are four of them. One of them is in the NWT; the others that are being done, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In regard to the water partnership agreements that we have with research departments in Alberta, all information is shared, correct, in regard to what's in the water? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Yes, all reports are shared with us. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** No. Just for myself, it's a big thing because everything flows down the Mackenzie and ends up right in Tuktoyaktuk, so I just want to make sure that any of the sites and our bilateral agreements are making sure that all information is shared and passed along to the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation in regard to information that is coming. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. For that detail of who we share with our Indigenous governments, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The results that we do get, part of the transboundary agreement is setting up what we call an early warning system in the transboundary agreement, which is sampling and the monitoring data for quality and quantity that's in Alberta upstream. What we do is: we have an annual report that we do with Alberta that is published, and that is on the monitoring that happens right at the border. If there are any changes that we see, we look at that early warning system data to see why that change is happening, and we make sure that we explain that in the annual reports. Right now, we are a little bit behind on that reporting because we needed to work together on how we were actually going to develop the reports, but I'm happy to say that we're working right now on two years together in one report so that we'll be up to date on that reporting. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** No. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I have you on the clock. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just going to go on the same line as my colleague here in terms of transboundary water items. I know that we have an agreement with Alberta and BC, but if I heard correctly, I don't think we have anything solid in place with Saskatchewan. Can the Minister give us an update if there has been any work done in this area? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We provided a draft agreement for review to Saskatchewan a couple of years ago, and we just recently had a meeting with them. They had some capacity challenges, and to be honest, on their priority list, it's not the same as our priority list because it's a very small portion of Saskatchewan. They have reviewed it now, and they are at the table with us. We are hopeful that we'll be able to come to an agreement with Saskatchewan in the near future. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Madam Chair.

**MS. KELLY:** Oh, my apologies, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** That's okay. I'm just waking everybody up. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I know I've said this before. The water systems, they don't see borders. With all our water systems, everything is all connected, and I bet you, if we had any major environmental concerns here on our side and something was flowing into another jurisdiction, they would be all over us. I think there needs to be that mutual respect. I think that's really important. I just thought I'd make that as a comment. I'm going to move on to the NWT water strategy. Can the Minister just explain exactly the contributions, how this works, and what exactly this line item is? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** My understanding is: it's funding for the University of Guelph to initiate groundwater monitoring in the Fort Liard area, but it has been delayed due to COVID. It's for projects like that, but for other details, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This can be for contributions with communities to work on community projects, or it can be to work on research projects, as the Minister has put forward. It's any sort of contribution agreements that we have or work that we do to implement the Water Stewardship Strategy Action Plan, so there are

many, many things that fall under that category. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That's good to know. This other last item here, this other contribution for the Mackenzie River Basin Board. Can the Minister explain what that is, as well?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There is an agreement that was signed in 1997 among all of the jurisdictions that are part of the Mackenzie River Basin and Canada, and that agreement, the way that it's implemented is through meetings of the Mackenzie River Basin Board. The NWT is a member, and we have an Indigenous member who participates on the Mackenzie River Basin Board, as do the other jurisdictions that are in the Mackenzie River Basin. This is a contribution towards this that we make every year so that the board can continue. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. NORN:** No. That's good to know. I wasn't too sure I understood that because, in the actuals, it didn't exist. Now, that's earmarked for that, so at least I know what that's for. At this time, I don't have any other questions, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. The number for water regulatory and assessment on page 88 is just kind of like in a flat line. I'm just wondering why it hasn't gone up or down. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I'll turn to the DM. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That's the amount that is allotted for water regulatory, and we are able to work within that budget. If you can see from the actuals, we actually came in under the budget in 2019-2020, so we've had discussions

with the regulatory group and this funding is adequate for the work that the need to do. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I think this is the line item where our water inspectors would go and do inspections, and I just want to know what's happening with the diamond mines right now, whether our inspectors are allowed to go to the site and whether they are able to perform their job. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. That's actually Lands that actually has the responsibility to go into the mines. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I don't think so.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We already have Lands officers who go into the mine and they do the water work at the same time. All of the diamond mines right now, the regulatory work by the water officers are done by Lands officers. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Okay. Am I allowed to ask: are those inspectors actually allowed to go to the site right now? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** That, we'd have to get back to the Member. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks. Yes. I know we're into year two of a pandemic, but it's an important time at some of these sites, as well, and the life cycle of some of these mines. The deputy minister knows this way better than I, that, in a couple of months, we're going to be talking about spring freshet. That's a very important time at these sites because water starts moving around and strange things can happen. I don't think our folks were able to go there in May and June of 2020, so I want to make sure that our folks get there this year and are able to do

their work. I don't know what else I can say. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** We will get back to the committee with that information. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Nothing further. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just curious to know why there was no 2019-2020 actual for the Mackenzie River Basin Board, and I apologize if that was answered. It's been a long day. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** To the DM. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We've been doing an assessment of things that should be contracts versus contributions, and this is one of them that we have switched to doing as a contract. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That's good to hear. I like to hear that we're being more efficient, so kudos to the department for that. When the deputy minister commented that the NWT water strategy line item, the \$175,000, could be used by a variety of projects and that includes research and community projects, given that there's potential for the university side to dip down as COVID restrictions still continue on, although I know that a lot of those people are probably really dedicated and are willing to maybe come up and spend two weeks in the bush isolating for themselves so they can do their research, I'm just curious to know: is this a potential or an area where we could be actually increasing the funding and then using this money to increase or meet our mandate of increasing employment in small communities since it is a broad fund from the sounds of it? It does sound like it could be a great way to start creating new projects in small communities at this time.

Perhaps maybe not an increase in funding as I see people's faces, but even just repurposing a little bit of this money so that, instead of it being very

restrictive, it could be used to sort of, again, keep money flowing into smaller communities, keep people working. It does seem like it's a great area to be moving forward with the water guardians or the guardian program, all of that kind of thing. It's all step in line with that, and increasing our knowledge economy, as well. Just more of a suggestion or comment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. I'll take that as a comment. Did the Minister have anything to follow-up?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I thank the Member for that, and we will have discussions. Nothing's a never-never, and here's maybe an opportunity to look at it. We will be having those discussions, but further detail, maybe get the deputy minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you. These are community monitors and provides funding to guardians already. We have looked at those opportunities. The department has actually looked at some of the work where we would travel into communities. We've hired local residents to work with communities to do that work. Along the lines of what the Member has stated, we've been doing that work, and this line item, in particular, is how we get money out for community monitoring and the guardian programs that we support related to water. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. No further? Okay. Are there any further questions under the water management monitoring? Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to this section, what percentage of these funds go to funding or providing funding to Indigenous groups to participate in development of strategies and action plans. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It would depend on the year because it depends on what projects that we're doing. We have an Aboriginal steering committee that supports the implementation of the water strategy and has since we started to develop it, so those costs are always covered for the participation of the Aboriginal steering committee. Some years, we have traditional knowledge projects that we're working on, or community work that we're doing. Other years, we have more research, but under the Water

Strategy, there is consistent work with communities because many of the action items are to work directly with communities on water issues. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to research and monitoring, what is the extent of monitoring that we do, and is it concentrated in a specific geographical area in the Northwest Territories? I suspect it's up and down the valley and throughout. The water coming into the NWT, we're going to see more contamination there, so I'm just wondering where we're doing most of our monitoring and where most of those dollars are going. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. We do have various sites across there, and we're making sure, as the deputy minister said, if there's early warning systems we have in place and we're able to see if there's contaminants coming down. For detail on where the sites are, I'll go, with your permission, to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There's different types of water monitoring that we do across the territory. There's hydrometric monitoring, which is water quantity monitoring. In the Beau-Del region, there's 27 sites; in the Sahtu, 22; in the Dehcho, 17, in the North Slave, 28; and in the South Slave, there's 10. They're distributed across the territory.

Another example is the community-based water quality monitoring that we do. There're five different monitoring -- it's with communities. There're five communities in the Beau-Del region. There're 11 sites that are monitored with the communities in the Sahtu; nine in the Dehcho; seven in the North Slave; and six in the South Slave. There's also meteorological monitoring that's mostly focused in the Beau-Del and the North Slave, and there's snow surveys that are done across the whole territory, as well. There're the trans-boundary water quality sites: one in the Beau-Del on the Peel; the Dehcho on the Liard; and two, one on the Hay and one on the Slave, in the South Slave. Then we have a water quality network with 22 stations in the North Slave and 10 in the South Slave. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to water monitoring, in the land claim agreements, there're specific sections, I think, for that. When we're looking at this, how do we incorporate what's in the agreements with respect to what we're doing in managing and participation from Indigenous groups? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. For that detail, I'll have to turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. When we were developing the water strategy, there were a number of things that we looked up, and land claim commitments were one of the main foundations for the Water Stewardship Strategy. There were a lot of concerns that were being brought forward about water because it's so important to people in the NWT, and we worked collaboratively with Indigenous governments and other water partners across the NWT to come up with that water strategy. Really, it was the foundation for the mandate for the transboundary agreements, as well. The Aboriginal steering committee is key. They have guided us. They guided the transboundary negotiations. They've guided all of the aspects of development and implementation of the water strategy. We've got the land claims as the foundation, and then we've got Indigenous participation the whole way through development and implementation. I hope that that answers the Member's question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The other question I have is with respect to the monitoring and management is: is there any case law out there that's available, any challenges with upstream industries and that, doing work up there? Has there been any challenges from any of the Indigenous groups or the Government of the Northwest Territories to challenge? There's pulp mills or mining companies that may have potential damage for waters coming into the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I'm going to have to go to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not specifically up to speed on case law specifically, but what I can speak to is the fact that we have participated as the government in environmental assessment processes for site-see and some other developments. The transboundary agreement, while it's cooperative in nature, we have a bilateral management committee for that. That management committee includes the assistant deputy minister from the NWT and from Alberta, and it has an Indigenous member, which is Tim Heron from the NWT Metis Nation, who sits on that bilateral management committee. That's where we bring concerns and address any issues that come forward for the transboundary agreement.

There's a whole dispute resolution mechanism that is built into the transboundary agreement, as well, if we can't come to an agreement, but the process there does not preclude us from using a legal method if required. What we are trying to do is collaboratively, through that bilateral management committee, as the first step. Then we take the opportunity to participate in environmental assessments as required, and then we have that dispute resolution mechanism. As I mentioned, we could still use legal recourse, if needed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** That's all. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Are there any further questions under water management and monitoring? Seeing none, please turn to page 88. Environment and Natural Resources, water management and monitoring, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$9,780,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Committee, we will now go to wildlife and fish, beginning on page 91, with information items up to page 94. Questions? Any questions? No questions? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Let's talk about caribou. The barren-ground caribou surveys were supposed to happen last year. They didn't because of COVID. What's happening this summer? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** We are planning to do the survey this summer. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. How much does it cost, and where is it found in the budget? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. For that detail, I will turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The surveys cost around \$430,000. They are done every two years. The budget was set up to have that funding there every two years, and now we are off-cycle because of COVID. What we are doing is we are lapsing the \$430,000 that we didn't spend on the surveys this year, and then we will be able to use that funding next year. We are going to adjust the cash flow so that that funding is available for every second year from then on. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate that. I just want to be crystal clear. The money can be carried over from last year to this year to allow for the survey work to be done? You don't have to cut internally, look for unused funds in other parts of ENR, or even within wildlife and fish to do the work? I just want to be really clear about that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. My understanding is: we are lapsing it this year, and then we are able to pick up the money next fiscal year to do the job that we were going to do this year. Because of COVID, we aren't able to. We do have the money. I wouldn't say we are transferring; we are lapsing it this year and getting the money next fiscal year to do the survey. For any additional detail, I will ask the deputy minister to talk about the finances to it.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The only addition that I will make is that we will need to put forward a supplementary request for next year, but the Department of Finance is aware that we are lapsing the funding this year and that the work

needs to be done next year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I will put in a good word for you guys right now with the Finance Minister that I want them to approve that, and if they don't, they will have to answer to me. I am deadly serious. These herds are in a very, very desperate state. One of the most reliable ways that we have to determine their health is through the calving ground surveys. If the work is not done, we have no idea what's going on with the overall population. I shouldn't say "no idea." Our ability to predict and project is diminished dramatically. I know I am talking to scientists about this, so they get this. We have to have that work done. I expect that all of Cabinet is going to line up behind that. I do want to ask, though, about the wildlife research and management line on page 92. There's a \$700,000 drop predicted or projected from what we spent last year. Can someone tell me why that is being reduced? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. \$230,000 was the Inuvik Tuktoyaktuk Highway environmental assessment funding. It was sunsetted. \$430,000 conservation and recovery of the Bathurst-Bluenose East barren-ground caribou herd. Funding fluctuates according to the calving plans. That's where that money that we had from talking about the survey. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate that. I'll just go back and ask one other question. The \$430,000 for the barren-ground caribou surveys, does that, then, have to be brought forward through a supplementary? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. You already have one vote. I appreciate that. I want to ask about work for caribou habitat protection. Where would I find it in the budget here? I see that there is a habitat and environmental assessment line. Is that where I would find money, how much, and what is actually being done to protect, I'll just pick on one herd, the Bathurst caribou herd?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I will turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My understanding is that the money for the habitat protection comes under the line item for habitat and environmental assessment. I don't have the exact number with me that we are using on that, but it's related to the pilot project that we have provided information on previously. I don't have the exact number at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** We'll make that commitment to get that back to committee. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks to the Minister for that. I had understood that there were some meetings that were to take place in the fall, or maybe it was in January, with the Tlicho and some other Indigenous governments and communities to start to identify specific areas for habitat protection, critical habitat. Look, there is nothing else we can do on the harvest side, quite frankly. I do appreciate the work of the Minister and what he did in the media today, so maybe we can do some more enforcement stuff there. There's not much we can do with the harvesters to deal with that anymore. We have tried the predator stuff. That seems to have worked a little bit. The one area where we haven't done anything and is still outstanding, even in the range plan, is habitat protection. I had understood there were going to be some meetings. What is the status of that work, and have we actually started to identify areas that need to be protected, even permanently, for the Bathurst caribou herd? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that level of detail, I will turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have begun work on all eight recommendations in the Bathurst caribou range plan. There has been a draft framework for the implementation of mobile caribou conservation measures. That was completed in March 2020, and we are currently working with

Aurora Geosciences to develop detailed operational guidance based on a pilot program, which piloted mobile caribou conservation measures in the summer and fall of 2020. We have also, as the Member stated, met with the Tlicho government and identified caribou habitat as a value at risk under our wildlife management system and also identified key boreal and barren-ground caribou habitat. It's my understanding that we are now having meetings with other Indigenous governments to get their input, as well, to include with the Tlicho input, and my understanding is that those meetings are ongoing at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes. I will probably have some more questions on this habitat protection, maybe later this week. However, I did want to ask about the status of transboundary work with the Government of Nunavut. The Minister did invite me to a meeting not that long ago. I guess it was about a year ago. The Nunavut Premier was there. He is interested. There were some music groups there. Where are we at with a transboundary caribou agreement? I know the Premier of Nunavut has been diverted with some other stuff, even in his hometown, but where are we at with a transboundary caribou agreement for the Bathurst herd and maybe some of the other herds? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. I will start and then turn it to the deputy minister. We have been trying to follow up on the meeting we had from last year, that the Member was invited to, a couple of Members from the House were invited to, which was really good. We had Indigenous governments. We had the Nunavut government. The Premier is the Minister of environment from Nunavut; not only is he the Premier, but he has taken that portfolio. Unfortunately, the situation has not arrived that we were able to have further conversations. As the Member talked about, he has been pretty busy in dealing with some of the challenges that are there. We are still trying to work with him. We have reached out a number of times, and we are trying to fit it into our schedule to have those conversations. However, the work for the staff, I will turn to the deputy minister.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't think that, per se, we were looking at a transboundary agreement in the sense of an agreement. We have

range plans and management plans that we have collaboratively developed with Nunavut. They are a partner that we work with regularly on the implementation of those plans, like with some of the other provincial governments, as well, when the herds go across boundaries. We recognize and work very closely at the department level with the department of environment in Nunavut, and certainly, they have been involved in these multi-year processes with Indigenous governments to develop range plans and management plans for the herds. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My colleague from Frame Lake covered a lot of the questions I was going to ask, but that is fine. There are a few questions I want to ask anyways. I am just looking at some sunsets here, the alternative harvest and the monitoring and range planning. Can the Minister explain a little bit about that, why these two line items are being sunsetted? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I have to go to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The alternative harvest funding was a one-time pilot funding project to assist harvesters in exploring alternative food sources other than caribou. Although there was no budget allocated ongoing, we have this year provided funding because of the mobile zone being as large as it is and the difficulty accessing caribou, so several Indigenous governments have received alternative harvest funding this year. Could I ask for clarity on what the other item was that the Member was asking about, please?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Monitoring and range planning.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This was also one-time funding, and it was to support Indigenous governments' and organizations' involvement in Boreal caribou management and range planning, so that work was scheduled to be completed in that year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Madam Chair, I am just concerned. We were just mentioning that caribou management, it's just important work, and I just do not want to see anything being taken away from that. I think that we need to make sure that we protect all our wildlife. I don't know. It just seems like this one-time contribution, I think this should be something that should be continuing on. That is how I feel about it. I am sure a few of my colleagues do, as well. I am going to move along here. That was just a comment. The wildlife management board, I saw it someplace else here. Maybe I am going off a little bit here. Can the Minister just explain what this is, this line item here for \$118,000?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I will ask the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This line item is for contributions to support the wildlife management boards across the NWT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you. The other item here, too, there is a decrease, as well, not so much a sunset, for the stewardship program. Can the Minister explain why there is a decrease there, as well?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. That there is due to internal alignment due to historical actuals. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry. I did not catch it. I heard a sneeze. Was that "historical actions"?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Historical actuals.

**MR. NORN:** I am just wondering about historical actual. Okay. Good. Can the Minister just elaborate what is meant by that? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Historical actuals are actually what it has cost us to do this program area, so we go to the actual here. We realize this is where the numbers are for us to be able to do it, so this is our actual cost to run the program. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** All right. Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, fair enough. I just was not too sure there. I don't have any other questions except to say, yes, to just continue to do the best we can with what we have got to support our caribou. Since time immemorial, our people lived off caribou, and I just hope that we can see future generations continue to harvest and hunt this animal. I am hoping that we keep these herds strong. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Yes. Thank you. I totally agree with the Member. As the Member is aware, we met with the YK Dene, the elders and chief, their committee there, to talk about it. We are also going in, I believe it's the 26<sup>th</sup>. The 24<sup>th</sup> is Fort Smith. The 26<sup>th</sup>, we are going into Lutselk'e to meet with chief and council and the elders, too, to talk about the caribou situation, as well, so we are looking and listening to our communities and affected governments and IGCs or IGOs, depending on who you talk to. Yes, so we are listening, and we are trying to make sure we give caribou a better place. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Are there any other questions under wildlife and fish? Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. It's called wildlife and fish, and I haven't heard anything about fish yet. Being from Hay River, I can't go back there if I don't ask questions. I would like to know what percentage of this budget item here goes to the area of fish management, I guess is what I'm asking.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. I'm going to go to the deputy minister for that detail. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This used to be the Wildlife Division, and it was changed to the Wildlife and Fish Division because we have begun discussions with the federal government to

look at taking on some responsibilities related to fish. What I will say here is that there are limited amounts in this particular budget other than for some of the enforcement aspects that happen at the regional level, that we have an agreement with the federal government already on, but fish are covered off under the Cumulative Impacts Monitoring Program. There is much work that is done on fish because it's one of the valued ecosystem components: water, fish, and caribou.

Also, there is fish work that has been done related to the Human Health Risk Assessment for Giant, and there is fish work that has been done as part of the Water Stewardship Strategy implementation because you don't generally talk to people about water and not talk about fish. We've done some fish research projects, but for wildlife and fish specifically, the funding is related directly to that enforcement role that I mentioned. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. If we are in discussions with the federal government, is there a timeline where we would take more responsibility? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** For that detail, I'll ask the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's early stages of that work. I think that this decision was before my time working with this section, but I believe what we were doing was setting ourselves up to be like other jurisdictions. Most jurisdictions have a wildlife and fish section, or fish and wildlife, as many of you have heard. The intent here is to be ready for those discussions, but they are at an early stage. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not sure what else to ask, then, if we don't really have a hell of a lot of responsibility. That will be it. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Are there any further questions under fish and wildlife? Seeing none, please go to page 92. Environment and Natural Resources, wildlife and fish, operations expenditure

summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$16,156,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. There are additional information items on pages 95 to 103. Do Members have any questions on any of those? Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm looking at the work performed on behalf of others, starting on page 101, and obviously that would vary over the years dependent on what, say, the federal government needs for us to do, et cetera, et cetera. When you look at it, for the year coming up, it's estimated to be around \$7.6 million. Could the Minister speak a little bit to this is \$7.6 million that wouldn't necessarily be in the economy of the Northwest Territories? I guess this could be an ITI question, but could the Minister speak to how we can leverage more money under work performed on behalf of others, as it seems like it might be a way to at least keep money flowing through our economy, using it to keep people employed? If we can fund projects under this or pay for things under this, why would we not try to increase this amount? Or maybe I'm completely out to lunch because it's almost eight o'clock on a really long day. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I'll start, and then I'll turn to the deputy minister. These here are projects that, as it says, we are performing on behalf of others. These are things that we work with the federal government or the organization on to get done. To advance it would be a bit of a challenge right now because of our commitments, but I think I got that look, so I'm going to turn to the deputy minister who can clarify that part. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that this is one element where the department is always looking for opportunities to work with others and to work that meets our mandate requirements, and the work that we need done as a territory. I definitely think that this list has been longer in other years, but that's likely the result of not finding as much alignment as we have in other years. I can definitely say that our department does a good job of looking for money from other groups to help support the work that we do in the NWT. There is always room for improvement, and we are definitely engaging at the department in discussions along those lines. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. I should also say that this is also a department that does lots of science and facts and things, as I said when I had other departments in front of me, so I like what I hear the deputy minister saying. I do understand what the Minister says about capacity at this time and such, but yes, I'm a firm believer that, the more we can get people from the South to pay for us and things that we need, why wouldn't we? More of a comment. I'm done. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. I'll take that as a comment. Any further questions under the information items? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I think I ask this almost every budget: the Inuvialuit Water Board. This is, I know, some kind of artefact of devolution. They do good work; they've got good staff. Why are they kind of on our payroll? I know we get money from the federal government for this, but these folks should be independent of GNWT, like the other land and water boards. I just don't understand why this is here. They should be getting their own money outside of the budget. This is just kind of like the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority. It's another one of these instances where this was a federally funded institution of public government, and now it's for GNWT. What are we doing to make this board really independent and allow them to hire their own staff, look after their own budget, do all their own stuff, instead of us doing it? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I can honestly say that I've been beside the Member for four years on the other side, and he has asked this question here. We've talked. We've looked at this, trying to find options there. The biggest challenge right now is our benefit package. When we were talking with the staff and that, that's the challenge. They don't want to lose the benefits, which will then have an impact on finding people to hire and that. We've had conversations with the chair. We've looked at it. They have a new chair. My understanding is that we're working with them on it. We would love to be able to do it, but at the same time, we don't want to cause undue stress to the staff who work there. For further clarity on some of the stuff that's being done on a day-to-day basis, or week-to-week or month-to-month, I will turn to the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Kelly.

**MS. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The IWB doesn't report to the waters group. It reports to the director of finance to make sure that they are as independent as possible. We have committed to the previous chair, and that commitment stands with the chair now, that we will deal with this through the process to amend the Waters Act, because it is going to require an amendment. We will review and discuss the transition of staff to the IWB through attrition and the option of establishing a reporting structure. They have asked us to look at multiple options, and we have said that we will discuss it when we are doing the Waters Act amendments because that's where we would need to make those changes. There are concerns from a labour relations perspective, and we want to make sure that we are doing it through that process and will be engaging with all those that we need to discuss this item with. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate the level of detail that has been provided by the deputy minister. I am just worried that this may not happen in my lifetime. Look, I want to get these guys as independent as they possibly can, away from GNWT. I think that's a shared objective, but I really hope that we can make some progress before I pass away. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Does the Minister have any comments?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I hope he doesn't pass away for a long, long time. I like the guy. I appreciate his tenacity when it comes to working for the people. Hopefully, we can get it done sooner than later. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Any further questions under that information item? Seeing none, I will get Members to please return now to the departmental summary found on page 69. Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, total department, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$97,874,000. Does committee agree? Mr. Norn.

COMMITTEE MOTION 85-19(2):  
TABLED DOCUMENT 286-19(2): MAIN  
ESTIMATES 2021-2022 - ENVIRONMENT AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES - DEFERRAL OF  
DEPARTMENT (PAGE 69),  
CARRIED

**MR. NORN:** Madam Chair, I move that this committee defer consideration of the estimates for

the Department of Environment and Natural Resources at this time. Marsi cho, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Consideration of Department of Environment and Natural Resources, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, operations expenditures, total department, is deferred. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Norn.

**MR. NORN:** Madam Chair, I move that the chair rise and report progress.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** The motion is in order. The motion is non-debatable. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you. Committee is now adjourned.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Sounds like everybody was having fun in Committee of the Whole today. May I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please? Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MS. SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022, and would like to report progress with one motion carried, and Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Do we have a seconder? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

#### DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Wednesday, March 10, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
  - Question 638-19(2), Medevac Services
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
  - Motion 30-19(2), Actions for Improved Housing Outcomes
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act
  - Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupational Certification Act
  - Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Interpretation Act
  - Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Securities Act

- Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
- Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act
- Committee Report 8-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on Motion 5-19(2): Referral of Point of Privilege Raised by Member for Monfwi on March 10, 2020
- Committee Report 9-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2019 Territorial General Election
- Committee Report 10-19(2), Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report on Bill 3: An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act
- Minister's Statement 77-19(2), National Housing Co-Investment Fund
- Tabled Document 165-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 1-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT
- Tabled Document 166-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 2-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT
- Tabled Document 167-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 3-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT
- Tabled Document 286-19(20), Main Estimates 2021-2022

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 10, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNED

The House adjourned at 7:54 p.m.