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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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Minister responsible for Homelessness
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Ms. Frieda Martselos
(Thebacha)

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(Great Slave)

Mr. Steve Norn
(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Mr. Kevin O'Reilly
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Ms. Lesa Semmler
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Minister of Lands
Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, March 10, 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, 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 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Item 2, Ministers' statements. Honourable Premier.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 135-19(2):
ANNUAL STATUS REPORT ON THE MANDATE
OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES, 2019-2023

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, one year ago, I tabled the Mandate of the Northwest Territories, 2019-2023. The mandate document outlines the actions our government is taking to advance the 22 priorities established by this Legislative Assembly and includes timelines and measures for tracking our progress. The priorities reflect actions that the 19 of us agreed needed to be advanced, and we collectively developed them in recognition that these actions were needed to strengthen the social and economic status of the Northwest Territories. To say that a lot has happened since the mandate was first tabled is an understatement.

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged all of us over the past year. It has changed how our government delivers programs and services and how we advance major projects and initiatives. It has changed how we work with our partners in the business and social sectors and with community governments and our relationship with Indigenous governments. It has changed fundamental assumptions about how people live, work, and do business in the Northwest Territories, across Canada, and around the world. While there are very hopeful signs that the worst impacts of the pandemic are behind us, it is not over yet. We collectively need to continue to demonstrate resilience and commitment to our communities and people.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that, despite the challenges of the pandemic and the delays we

initially encountered as we turned our focus to our response, we expect that the majority of our government's mandate will be achieved within the life of this Legislative Assembly, reasonably close to our original anticipated timelines. With this in mind, later today, I will table the first annual status report on the implementation of the mandate. The report reflects on a full year of our government's work, from February 2020 to January 2021, to advance and fulfill our commitments. It highlights some of our government's major accomplishments from the past year as well as a number of expected achievements for the upcoming year. The report also provides detailed tracking of the status of the commitments, actions, timelines, and performance measures outlined in the mandate.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with Members some of the highlights from the annual status report. In the past year, our government has made it a priority to build and strengthen our relationships with Indigenous governments. This work has included establishing the Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs with Regular Members and continuing to work to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We have also worked to improve culturally respectful social supports, such as on-the-land healing programs and counselling programs, and to provide support for Indigenous governments to deliver mobile addictions treatment, family-based treatment, and after-care programming.

Further efforts to improve social supports for all residents that need them have included making policy changes to help low-income seniors and persons with disabilities address home repairs, improving access to social services through integrated services delivery, and putting in place a program for non-governmental organizations to fund facility repairs, address code issues, and undertake retrofits to support new childcare spaces.

Mr. Speaker, over the coming year, our government will continue to respond to the pandemic and protect the health and safety of our residents while looking ahead to capture opportunities for social and economic recovery so that we can emerge stronger. Many of the actions related to social and economic recovery we will take are already

captured in our mandate, which we will continue to advance. These actions include continuing to advance the Aboriginal rights negotiations with Indigenous governments, making policy and program changes to improve social supports, advancing major infrastructure projects that will provide opportunities for Northerners, improving government procurement to maximize the benefit for Northern residents and businesses, and many, many more.

We recognize that we will need to redouble our efforts and continue working collaboratively with our partners, including Members of the Legislative Assembly, Indigenous governments, community governments, federal, territorial, and provincial governments to continue to advance the mandate commitments. We will also continue to build relationships with non-government organizations, the private sector, and residents throughout the North. Teamwork is now more important than ever as we turn our attention from response to recovery to rebuild and emerge stronger from the impact of the pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the work this government has completed so far, and I am optimistic that the momentum we have built during the first year of this Legislative Assembly's term and especially as we emerge from the impacts of the pandemic will translate into an increased rate of progress on our commitments. The work I have talked about today represents just some of the progress we have made to implement the mandate. The mandate will continue to be an important tool for measuring the success of this government and the priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly, and I look forward to reporting additional progress in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Ministers' statements. Minister of Infrastructure.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 136-19(2);
UPDATE ON THE TLICHO HIGHWAY
CONSTRUCTION PROJECT / TLICHUM
APQUTIQPANGA

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: [English translation not available]. Mr. Speaker, here is what I said.

---Applause

The 19th Legislative Assembly has identified making strategic infrastructure investments that connect communities, expand the economy, and reduce the cost of living as a priority. These projects also support the Northwest Territories' economy as we look at ways to recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, one project that supports our government's efforts to meet this priority is the Tlicho highway. Construction of the all-season road began in the fall of 2019. Despite a brief six-week pause in the work caused by COVID-19 last spring, the project remains both on schedule and on budget, with substantial completion and official opening expected in the fall of 2021. To date, approximately 97 kilometres of embankment construction and 45 kilometres of gravel surfacing have been completed. Out of four bridges, three have been completed, and the remaining one will be completed this upcoming summer. Seasonal construction ended on December 15, 2020, and will resume in the spring.

When the Tlicho highway is completed, this two-lane gravel highway will provide year-round access from NWT Highway No. 3 to the community access road to Whati. The project will help connect communities, support employment and training opportunities across the region, increase our territory's resiliency to climate change, and create new social and economic opportunities. The Tlicho highway will end at kilometre 97, where it connects with the existing Whati access road. We are continuing to explore opportunities with the Tlicho Government to improve the condition of the Whati access road, and we are currently working on design and obtaining a water licence and assessing funding options for that initiative.

Mr. Speaker, the Tlicho highway represents a true collaboration between the Community Government of Whati, the Tlicho Government, Kiewit Canada Development Corporation, the federal government, and the GNWT. It is an example of how infrastructure on Northwest Territories Indigenous territory can be carried out. The Tlicho highway runs through Tlicho lands, and the Tlicho Government's 20 percent equity ownership in North Star Infrastructure is reflective of this important fact. This highway has been a positive step towards reconciliation, and we will take lessons learned to apply to future projects.

Like all of us, North Star Infrastructure has had the added challenge this past year of keeping their staff and the surrounding communities safe during the pandemic. North Star Infrastructure has had an extensive COVID-19 mitigation plan in place that complies with the Chief Public Health Officer's orders and guidelines. I commend their commitment to ensuring the safety of their employees while keeping this project on track.

Increasing access to Tlicho communities will help reduce the cost of living in the region and support new social opportunities, while also attracting interest from industry in the exploration and development of natural resources. I will continue to provide updates as we progress through the project

timelines. Also look forward to the day when we can celebrate the achievement for the community of Whati and the Tlicho region. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 137-19(2): COMMUNITY ELECTIONS

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, local elections are important to community residents as they provide an opportunity to select a municipal government that reflects the wants and needs of the community. Being an elected official is one of the best ways that an individual can support their community in providing a safe, sustainable, and healthy environment for all residents.

In 2020, there were 10 municipal elections in the Northwest Territories where 83 candidates competed for 44 seats. I want to extend my congratulations to all who were elected and sincere thanks to all those who had submitted their names in a race to represent and give back to their communities. This year, there will be 21 community municipal elections held. Four Tlicho communities, Behchoko, Gameti, Whati, and Wekweeti, will hold elections for four chiefs and 28 councillor positions in June. June is also when the Charter Communities of Tsiigehtchic and Fort Good Hope will fill 11 councillor seats. Later in October, these, which fall under the Cities, Towns and Villages Act, will seek to fill five mayor positions and 38 councillor seats: the Town of Hay River, the Town of Inuvik, the Town of Norman Wells, the Town of Fort Smith, and the Village of Fort Simpson. Finally, Mr. Speaker, in December, there will be 10 hamlet communities electing six mayors and 39 councillors. These communities include Aklavik, Enterprise, Fort Liard, Fort McPherson, Fort Providence, Fort Resolution, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk, and Ulukhaktok.

Mr. Speaker, these elections are an important opportunity where aspiring candidates in each of these communities can run for a community municipal leadership position and where residents have the opportunity to choose their municipal leadership. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs continues to work with the NWT Association of Communities and community governments to promote participation in municipal politics. Best of luck to all individuals who put their name forward as a candidate this year and to each community as they make choices on their local leadership. I want to thank all those who may consider putting their names forward as candidates in the upcoming elections. I want to acknowledge the staff and many volunteers who take on roles in

these election processes on behalf of municipalities. It takes dedication and significant efforts by many people to support the election process behind the scenes.

Elections provide an opportunity for all individuals to serve as leaders and decision-makers the opportunity to shape the future for their friends, neighbours, and residents. It is important that our elections are open and accessible to all. Once again, mahsi and good luck to all who are going to be submitting their names for the 2021 municipal elections across the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MEDEVAC SERVICES AND MEDICAL ESCORTS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Medevacs for our elders in the communities. Travel saves lives through the medevac system. I am sure that not one person in the NWT does not appreciate the emergency medical services provided by in-flight services.

We worry about our elders when they are taken by medevac to large hospitals. We know that they will receive the immediate medical care that they need, but we also know that, on top of the pain, the worry, they have to be disorientated, anxious, lonely. They may get confused about what is expected of them to do. The hospitals in Inuvik and Yellowknife are huge compared to our community health centres or even Inuvik. It's critical that our elders have someone to take with them during this medical travel. Lately, an elder was medevaced to Yellowknife in the early evening out of Tuktoyaktuk. The family decided that here nephew would accompany her. The elder was admitted into the hospital, and the young man had no place to stay here.

Mr. Speaker, Tuktoyaktuk does not have a doctor so, if the elders need to leave their home community to receive medical treatment, then we need to have them escorted, also out of Sachs Harbour, Ulukhaktok, and Paulatuk. We need escorts for our elders to take proper care of them and to make sure that, if they need a translator, the nephew or niece are there to translate for them, so we need help with that. I will have questions for the health Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
YELLOWKNIVES DENE FIRST NATION
HOUSING STRATEGY

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. For the last couple of years, the Yellowknives Dene First Nation have been working on the establishment of their own housing strategy for the communities Ndilo and Dettah. To inform their work, the YKDFN has conducted their own housing survey among their membership. They have been gathering their members' inputs so they can understand the types of homes and structures that people want to see in their community. This work is being done to help them to formulate a community plan to provide home ownership opportunities for their members. Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, the YKDFN are aiming to assume control of their entire housing system, including designing, construction, governance, and administration of housing within the communities. However, in order to support the re-delegation of control of housing, the NWT HC will need to realign many of their policies and practices to successfully accommodate and support this goal.

In addition, there are several other barriers that the YKDFN must overcome if they are to successfully take control of housing. First, the GNWT must continue to lobby to the federal government for more funding from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the CMHC. Our government must continue advocating on behalf of the YKDFN and all of the communities in the North to secure more housing funding for the long term. Secondly, the YKDFN also face the barriers of paying home insurance and home mortgages. Banks won't allow mortgages on reserves or for many First Nation communities, simply because the lands the homes sit on are not private property. First Nation lands hold a special designation, so banks cannot use homes on these lands as collateral in case payments from clients can't be met. Therefore, banks have decided to entirely exclude people in these situations from any options for mortgages. This issue is also related to the unsettled Akaitcho land claim, which is still ongoing. Lastly, Mr. Speaker, Maslow's hierarchy of needs states that the first needs that must be met for people to be satisfied in their lives are physiological needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. That is the cornerstone for healthy individuals and communities.

In closing, I commend the YKDFN on their leaders' long work on their housing strategy, and I commit to do my best to help them achieve their goals in this matter. Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
BIOMASS HEATING AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY
OF NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING
CORPORATION HOUSING

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. It has been a long tradition of our people to gather wood for the long winter ahead, and when the wood supply gets low, you then go out and gather more wood. This goes on until warmer weather arrives. This process was and is instilled in us. In fact, I got to believing my middle name was Go Get Wood. Yes, Chief Go Get Wood. It has a nice ring to it.

Mr. Speaker, I don't tell stories for free. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has annual reports on their success stories, whether it be a new house, a new seniors' complex, or the myriad of housing programs for repairs and renovations. The NWT Housing Corporation has what I believe is their own energy strategy. It is energy efficiencies. The energy efficiencies entail adding extra insulation value to the floors, walls, and roofs of existing and new houses. The idea is to try to capture and retain as much heat as can be afforded by all the extra insulation to the homes. That is the goal of an energy efficiency program for the interior and exterior shell of the home.

A biomass energy program adds value to not only the home, but the pocketbooks of the tenant and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Biomass district heating systems will reduce the reliance on imported fuels, reduce fuel consumption, and provide significant savings to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's utility costs overall. Most of all, biomass use is known to cut greenhouse gas emissions and, at the same time, meets the goals of the Biomass Energy Strategy of the GNWT. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
HOUSING NEEDS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Housing was identified as a priority for this government, and more importantly, it is a basic need that has a significant impact on one's quality of life and one's future. This government, with all its good intentions, has made minimal progress over the last several decades on meeting the housing needs of Indigenous people in the Northwest Territories. This failure has contributed to disadvantaging Indigenous Peoples in areas such as education, employment, and health. The lack of a home contributes to this while taking away one's ability to make choices, such as children being prepared for school in the morning, parents

participating in the workforce, and the dream of starting or raising a family.

What we take for granted when it comes to housing, there are many in the Northwest Territories who would welcome our support to just find basic housing for them. With those seeking public housing because there are no other options, it troubles me when I have to tell them that there is no housing available and that this government has no plans to substantially increase public housing units in the Northwest Territories. The department talks about suitability, adequacy, and affordability; nowhere do they talk about the actual number of units required to house those on long waiting lists throughout the NWT and how they plan to rectify the situation.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation exists for a reason. Their responsibilities include the provision to provide, develop, maintain, and manage housing for senior citizens, families, individuals, disabled persons, and the homeless. I have noticed that inaction in all those areas has become an escalating problem when it comes to the NWT Housing Corporation meeting those provisions. With all the money received from the federal government, we still cannot get it right.

Mr. Speaker, I can go on and say what we all know when it comes to the failure of this government in addressing the housing crisis in the Northwest Territories. The Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and her senior bureaucrats do not seem to grasp that a housing crisis exists, and I am not sure why that is. If the Minister is the problem, then I would ask the Premier for a Cabinet shuffle. If it is the senior bureaucrats who are the problem, then I would ask the Premier to make a change at that level. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SENIORS' HOUSING NEEDS

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I'm going to expand on a topic that I spoke about last week in relation to the NWT Housing Corporation which is the need for a new policy change for housing seniors in the NWT. Mr. Speaker, last week, I asked the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation if her department would consider creating a seniors housing strategy for public housing. She would not commit to doing so but said she would bring the idea to her department. The Minister's answer wasn't a yes but it wasn't a hard no either. I consider that a good

start. Here are some points to help the Minister to decide yes.

First, Mr. Speaker, the population of seniors is the fastest growing population sector in the territory. According to the NWT Bureau of Statistics, between 2003 and 2018, the population of people aged 60 years and over increased by 115 percent. In raw numbers, this data represents an increase of seniors in the NWT by 3,194, meaning, in 15 years, we're more than double the senior population in the NWT. In comparison, the total population of the NWT increased by only 5 percent over the same period. The proportion of seniors is projected to increase to at least 20 percent of the total of the NWT population by 2035.

Mr. Speaker, a second reason that the Minister should consider a new seniors housing policy is the need to take into account the unique and sometimes complex needs of seniors. Right now, anyone, whether senior or otherwise, who apply for public housing is also considered based on their level of income. This policy is narrow-minded and discriminatory for seniors as there are other factors to consider which impacts their living situations. As I said before, we need to consider the age, level of mobility, and any dependents that seniors may have.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I don't think seniors should continue to be into the same general pool of people who are looking for public housing. Based on the increased number of seniors, I think we need to consider putting seniors into their own pool of individuals seeking public housing. I think we also need to consider creating an average medium rental amount that we charge seniors for public housing.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, we can't be turning away because of their monthly pensions or Old Age Security payments. We have to get realistic about how we house seniors in the NWT. We need neutral housing policies to help house as many seniors as we can. I will have questions for the Minister of Housing later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOUSING WAIT LISTS

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm having déjà vu today. Last year, on this exact day in this House, I spoke to the issues around housing wait lists and the struggle to access private market housing while waiting for housing.

Mr. Speaker, in Inuvik, last year, in my Member's statement, I also stated that the wait lists for the Inuvik housing authority had 80 for one bedroom, 90 for two bedrooms, 10 people for three bedrooms. Most recently, just last month, I got an email from the Minister's office with a little bit of good news saying 57 people for one bedroom, 18 for two bedroom, two for a three-bedroom, and one for a four-bedroom. There has been some movement on these lists, and the numbers have gone which is good news. The email also mentioned that there will be tear down of old units of my community, and the new units to be built will be configured to address the most urgent needs of the waiting list. While this is good news in theory, Mr. Speaker, when will we ever see these units as we don't seem to see this as an urgent need being addressed to get units on the ground and in motion other than RCMP units that have no impact to the community residents?

Mr. Speaker, another concern is that we are replacing old units but not adding more units to our housing stock, so how will we ever overcome any of our social issues if we can't even get our residents the basic needs of housing. The residents of the NWT want housing. Does the Minister and her staff hear us? If so, can they act? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Members' statements. Member for Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOUSING ISSUES IN GREAT SLAVE

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As an MLA, one of the things I've heard most from my constituents about is housing. Not only does my community border downtown Yellowknife with its growing social issues, but there are also several apartment buildings in the district that are home to residents on income security as well as NWT housing clients. When I began to campaign for MLA, I visited these buildings to knock on doors and became concerned at the state of their disrepair. It was apparent that regular maintenance was not occurring, and I saw many safety issues.

Over the following year, I've heard from constituents about several of their housing issues including energized parking stalls that don't work, leading to vehicle freeze ups and major mechanical damage; and a lack of snow clearing at buildings, causing treacherous conditions and many occurrences of residents falling leading to injury. Lights are burnt out and locks are broken creating issues with security and a high level of reported criminal activity and trespassing. Many times, the landlord is contacted with no reply, leaving residents no option but to vent on social media in

hopes of affecting change. Generally, these pleas fall on deaf ears, not surprising given the large percentage of apartment buildings owned by southern real estate firms. These firms, or REITS, have a mandate to increase profits for their shareholders. This leads to a high turnover of renters in apartments as it is "good business" to have a certain percentage of new units for rent each year so you can increase the rent.

All of these conditions and a lack of housing options is causing a major social crisis in the North. Often units are badly in need of repair, with mould and other health concerns often not addressed by the southern-based owners; and when they are, there are no overflow housing units for temporary shelter while work is being done. Large families are in units that are not adequate for their size, and there is a major lack of single person units in the North.

Increasing the number of affordable homes and reducing core housing needs is one of the 22 priorities of this 19th Assembly, and I think all of us would agree it is likely the most important given the overwhelming need. If there is one legacy I hope we can leave as a collective group, it is to see this issue addressed during our time in office. Once people have a safe, healthy place to live, they will feel stable, and feeling stable is a key component of recovery and wellbeing. Until such a time when our residents feel safe and stable in their homes, we cannot progress on the myriad of other social issues facing us. Mr. Speaker, it is time we recognize that housing isn't just an infrastructure situation; it's a social one.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, NWT Housing Corporation has told us the solution to our northern housing problem is \$0.5 billion or partnerships, and preferably both. With housing stocks that continues to age, a reluctance to increase housing stock, and the missing policy to guide and govern housing partnerships, we are at a metaphorical fork in the road and need to take action. We need to find new funding and operations options that pull us outside of the cyclical nature of northern housing solutions and explore collaborative partnerships for northern housing. Examples of successful public-private partnerships for public housing exist across Canada where a cooperative venture between the public and private sectors and Indigenous governments exist, to build on the expertise of each partner, and to share costs, revenues, and responsibilities.

To get there, Mr. Speaker, we need a foundation. Kelowna, B.C., adopted a healthy housing strategy that links human and public health, employment, and the general quality of life in the community. It identified eight roles for government in which, in addition to the visible management of direct funding and the construction and operation of non-market housing, included planning and regulation, advocacy, research, community development and education, and, finally, strategic partnership. Stakeholders for this policy work included builders, lenders, civil society, NGOs, academia, as well as key education, social wellness, and health departments. I strongly encourage the GNWT to develop a similarly inclusive partnership foundation developed with Indigenous leadership and northern business, and also includes internal policy collaboration between Lands, MACA, Health, Justice, ECE, and the Housing Corporation.

In October 2017, on World Habitat Day, the UN recognized that 1.6 billion people still live in inadequate housing. They pointed out that housing policy, addressing first the needs of the most vulnerable, especially women and youth, must be placed at the centre of its strategies to fight poverty and improve health and employment. To achieve the priorities of the 19th Assembly, we need to place affordable and accessible safe housing at the forefront. This work cannot be achieved in a silo, and the government cannot accomplish this alone.

Mr. Speaker, I am thankful to the Minister for agreeing to review the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation mission statement. I now call on the corporation to establish the policy foundation to support the construction, maintenance, and success of housing partnerships within our northern communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LAND TENURE AND HOMEOWNERSHIP

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all recognize that one of the biggest barriers to NWT housing is the lack of market. Home insurance, land tenure, and complicated home ownership schemes mean that it is hard for people to own their own homes. In many communities, a house is not an investment, but a liability. Mr. Speaker, one of the things we must do to build more market housing and to get more people into home ownership is increase the use of fee simple tenure. A great place to start with this, Mr. Speaker, is the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation owning their housing units.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, this is something that they have been trying to do for a number of years. Yet, presently, the Department of Lands makes it very difficult for the Housing Corporation to own their own buildings in fee simple. If we want to be successful in promoting home ownership and in transferring units to people to actually own their houses, then we need to transfer all of the Housing Corporation's leases to them in fee simple title. Fee simple title is the foundation of any housing market. It allows people to get mortgages. It is the strongest property interest that any bank will support.

Mr. Speaker, we have a long history of a love of leases in the Northwest Territories. I get this is complicated, and it gets caught up in land tenure and land ownership debates. I want to give people their houses in fee simple. I want to give our residents their houses in fee simple, and the best place to start is with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation allowing them to own their own units. I will have questions for the Minister of Lands about why we have not done this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EULOGY FOR DAVID SCHINDLER

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. A good friend and advocate for the North and nature, David William Schindler, passed away last week at the age of 80. David grew up in Minnesota and studied engineering and then biology in the US before completing his doctorate at Oxford in 1966. Later that year, he moved to Canada to serve at Trent University before becoming the founding director of the Experimental Lakes Area project near Kenora, Ontario, in 1968. His 10 years there were filled with real-life experiments of adding different chemicals to small lakes to solve real-world problems, such as the dying Great Lakes and acid rain. This research was revolutionary in terms of our understanding of aquatic ecosystems.

In 1989, University of Alberta offered both David and his wife, Suzanne, positions, and he became the Killam Memorial Chair and Professor of Ecology. That same year, he was named to the Alberta Pacific Review Panel to study a proposed pulp mill on the Athabasca River. Cindy Kenny-Gilday sat on that panel for the Northwest Territories, and Jim Boucher, Chief of the Fort McKay First Nation, was also on the panel. They did their best to protect the North. Eventually, the mill went ahead but with new technology that was less harmful to the environment. At the University of Alberta, Schindler continued his water research. He warned about the environmental impact of how "the

combination of climate warming, increases in human populations and industry, and historic drought is likely to cause an unprecedented water crisis" in the Prairie provinces.

In 1996, he appeared as an expert witness during the review of Canada's first diamond mine. He next turned his attention to the environmental impacts of the tar sands on the Athabasca River watershed. David was always watching out for us, what was upstream of the Northwest Territories. During his 50-plus-years, he was awarded most of the planet's top environmental science prizes and held 13 academic or honorary degrees from universities around the world. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2004.

One of his best quotes is as follows: "I am looking forward to some day seeing things done right so that I can relax and just do science. That's where the fun is. It isn't in hassling with politicians and that, which is to me rather like playing chess with a gorilla. The game is boring, and you know you are going to win, but you have got to be prepared to duck once in a while when they get angry and take a swing at you." Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 652-19(2):
CHANGES AT THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
HOUSING CORPORATION

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Housing for people in the NWT is a basic need that should be considered a right for all people in the NWT. To bring about real change and bold new ideas, I have but one question for the Premier: can she tell me and the people of the Northwest Territories, in order to address a growing housing crisis in the NWT, if she would commit to considering either a Cabinet shuffle or changing out senior bureaucrats in the NWT Housing Corporation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to start by saying, and I have said it many times and I believe it to the core of my whole entity: Maslow's hierarchy says food, clothing, and shelter are the most basic needs. If you don't actualize those, you cannot prosper. I believe that to the core of my being.

Mr. Speaker, I came into politics because of working 20 years with low-income families and homeless women. I came in with a cause for housing, and I haven't dropped that cause. I was the housing Minister in the last Assembly for a couple of years, and then, when I got "promoted," they called it, to education, which also needs a huge amount of work, I didn't see it as a promotion. I saw it as a loss. Housing has always been my passion.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to consider a shuffle at this time. I know that every single Minister here is compassionate. They care about their files, and they are doing a great job. I know that the Minister of housing has so much passion for housing, but I know that housing is an issue. I did meet with the housing team, and I met with the Minister in December. We talked about the changes that needed to happen to the Housing Corporation. We talked about the change of policies that were needed and the change of focus that has to happen.

Mr. Speaker, it would be not okay for me to go through this Assembly and not address housing. It is a priority. It was my priority when I came, and it's still my priority. I will do what is necessary to make sure, before the end of this Assembly, that we have more houses on the ground and that we address -- not all, I'm not naive, but that we start addressing the housing needs of the Northwest Territories. That is my commitment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 653-19(2):
NEW HOUSING UNITS IN INUVIK

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of housing. How many units will be built in Inuvik, other than the RCMP housing, in the 2021-2022 fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the construction season throughout the Northwest Territories and specifically for the Member's questioning of how many units are going to be constructed in her riding, I don't have that number on my right now. We are looking at the co-investment fund applications going forward. We are looking at Indigenous partnerships, and I am engaging with the federal government and yet to hear an announcement provided by them about being able to put houses on the ground throughout the Northwest Territories. Going forward, I am very

confident in an announcement that will be coming forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you to the Minister. I know I didn't give you the questions ahead of time, so I know some of the details you probably don't have. As the Minister of housing, you know that you have four years here. How many houses will be built in Inuvik for the residents of Inuvik by the end of this government?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Right now, the Housing Corporation is going through a lot of changes with the old units that we do have. All of the single-family dwelling units across the Northwest Territories are up for sale. We are bringing that back to the table to discover and to find out a considerable, meaningful sale amount on each of those units and taking a lot of consideration into the occupancy of those units, as well. Like I had said, we are really weighing in on Indigenous partnership and federal engagement, as well. I don't have the numbers specifically for everybody in the Northwest Territories here to look and update that construction build for this year. I will provide that to the Members.

MS. SEMMLER: I have heard the Premier and I have heard the Minister talk about the resale of these older units, and my constituents, some of them, that is just not what they are looking for. They want to be able to access low-cost housing because of the economy and because there are not enough jobs to keep people working. To manage a home, as my other colleague said, it's not always what everyone is looking for, so how many additional units will be added by leases if not built from private market in Inuvik to increase the stock?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: I would like to inform the Member of the number of units being distributed out through the Northwest Territories. Once again, specifically for her region, I don't have those numbers on me right now. I just look at the old builds that are there. I know that throughout the territory that that is not a significant response for housing, looking at what we already have on the ground and not being able to have those new builds. I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that an announcement coming forward will honestly address this issue going forward. Right now, I am just not able to provide that information.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did ask a lot of questions and did not get a lot of answers. Will I get a commitment from this Minister that she would be willing to look into more leases in my community to decrease that list in my community, not just in my community? That's the thing. If there

is this great announcement that we are going to get more units, then I look forward to it, but will I see it in the life of this government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Absolutely. We are going to be able to meet the needs of a portion of what we are to be building, 100 units on the ground. We are supposed to be looking at home ownership, as well, but also looking at more leases for the Member's riding. I am interested in doing things differently. I am interested in investing into the local regions, as well. If there is something that is unique about that region, if there is an opportunity for the Housing Corporation to enter into new leases that are available in those specific regions and in those specific ridings, I would be interested in looking at that. Being able to work with the MLAs, as well, to identify opportunities within their ridings, I would definitely want to entertain that and be able to look at where we could go with that conversation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 654-19(2):

MEDEVAC SERVICES AND MEDICAL ESCORTS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I was talking about medevacs in our communities. I brought it up last week. It is really concerning to me, regarding how everything is happening. We are either short of planes, or staff are timing out during these medevacs and spare planes. Where do we get the service required to support our people in our small communities? Mr. Speaker, how many patients have been medevaced from Nunakput to communities, to Inuvik, Yellowknife, or Edmonton, in the last year? How many of the escorts have been approved to go with them at that time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have an answer that is Nunakput-specific, but I can tell you that, in the 2020 calendar year, for the Beaufort-Delta region as a whole, there were 305 air-ambulance transports. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: I thank the Minister for that. How does the Minister weigh the cost of medical response and medical travel against the cost of more doctors at Inuvik's hospital, for more doctors' visits in Tuktoyaktuk and Sachs Harbour and Paulatuk and Ulukhaktok?

HON. JULIE GREEN: I am going to take that question on notice and provide an answer to the Member by Friday.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Taken as notice. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 655-19(2):
BIOMASS HEATING AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY
FOR NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING
CORPORATION HOUSING

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I sense a reluctance on the part of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to commit to a biomass energy strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce reliance on and consumption of diesel fuels. Can the Minister elaborate on the NWT Housing Corporation's plans to comply with the GNWT's energy plan in reducing greenhouse gas emissions? Mahsi.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Energy efficiency is a huge consideration within the Housing Corporation and when we are building and retrofitting our units. I just wanted to speak about the partnerships that we do have throughout the territory, as well, and trying to alleviate those gas emissions, as well. Looking at how we are building our units, one of the highlights I have just at my fingertips now is that, in Aklavik, we do have a nine-plex that has been constructed, and we are looking at the decrease in using fuel in our units. We also replaced all of the light bulbs in our units, as well, and we are looking at the higher efficiency and savings when constructing our units. However, going back to the Member's comment about looking at an energy efficiency plan, this is what I had brought back to my department, and I would like to bring that back and provide information to the Members, as well, as to how we are changing the way that we are constructing our units and also retrofitting them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi to the Minister for that. I think she is hooked on the energy efficiency that I mentioned in my Member's statement that housing currently practices. I am talking about that step further, about a biomass energy strategy; that is to incorporate wood-pellet boiler systems as district heating, which would greatly reduce reliance on fossil fuels, especially diesel fuel, of which I think housing has got about 2,400, 2,600, or 2,900 units in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister speak to the long-range plans of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation as I sense a reluctance to comply with the biomass energy strategies?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: There is no reluctance from the Housing Corporation. As the Minister holding the portfolio, I am open to a lot of new

initiatives throughout the territory and in looking at how we could better run our public housing more efficiently. I am open to having those conversations, and I will follow up with the Member to elaborate on those opportunities. I just have my binders and my folders in front of me. These questions are coming up, and I don't have that information right at my fingertips. It's probably somewhere in my documents here, but I can guarantee to the Member here that we have had this discussion and we have exercised this approach already in a number of our communities throughout the territory. I will follow up with the Member with further information.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi to the Minister for that. While she doesn't have her golden book, I guess I'll keep firing away. The cost of electricity is going up. The cost of heating fuels is going up. This will, in turn, raise tenants' rents and their costs for utilities. How will the Minister and the department combat this scenario?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Working with the utilities within our public housing units and also looking at the fluctuating use of oil, gas, and electricity, those numbers fluctuate throughout the year, and we do have a strategy within the Housing Corporation to alleviate those costs. I do trust that those costs could be quite significant, but also, they are subsidized costs, as well. Once again, I will follow up with the Member to further elaborate on the response.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and mahsi to the Minister, who will follow up. Given the likelihood that CMHC will cut funding to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation for operations and maintenance by 2038, can the Minister commit to a biomass energy strategy to present to CMHC for consideration in the hopes CMHC will have a change of heart? Mahsi.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Absolutely. I will be speaking with my federal counterparts and with Canada, and I will present a strategy such as this because we do need houses on the ground. Looking at the cost of living for the Northwest Territories and the affordability up to our higher, Arctic communities, as well, this would be a significant approach that I will have a conversation with Canada about. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 656-19(2):
SENIORS' HOUSING NEEDS

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the housing Minister consider doing a review of all the policies within the Housing Corporation to address all the concerns of the people of the NWT, especially seniors? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for your comment. Our policies have been brought up a number of times throughout this government, and it is something that I've brought back to my department, as well, looking at updating those policies. I did table a document; I want to say it was early this week. Every week, we're so busy with session that it seems that days have gotten by, but I did table our policy document with a number of changes that are outlined within that policy. I will provide the Member with the updated changes and a copy of the document. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Would the housing Minister consider, within this review, setting a policy for ensuring that our seniors are not discriminated against, are treated equally, and consider a fair, one-rate system for all seniors?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Client service is a priority of mine, personally, and I want to make sure that we deal with each of our clients fairly and consistently throughout the territory, looking at the seniors and how the Housing Corporation administers, and also looking at the rent charges that come with that. I want to bring this back to my department, as well, because I have to display fairness and consistency throughout the territory. We do have a number of homelessness issues throughout the territory. We do have overcrowding, as well, and our wait list is quite significant. I will bring this back to my department. It's going to take further consideration and a further review to bring those answers back to the Member.

MS. MARTSELOS: The seniors have paved the way for us in our present life. They worked hard and gave us values. The Minister should reconsider how seniors and clients of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation are treated and ensure that systemic racism doesn't take place. Does the Minister agree with this?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes, I agree. We are working with seniors throughout the territory, whether it be subsidies for cost of living, whether it be housing, whether it be additional services that the government does provide. Looking at the way we work with the seniors within the Housing Corporation, I want to make sure there is fairness and consistency. Also, not only that, but the

Housing Corporation has made changes to work with the seniors throughout the Northwest Territories. The Housing Corporation has built nine seniors' complexes throughout the territory. We have also alleviated the need for land tenure and insurance for our programming for private senior homeowners, as well. With those going forward, I think the Housing Corporation has made significant changes, and I hear the Member that we can't address every single scenario throughout the territory. The Housing Corporation is making movement, and I will provide an update to the Member.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A complete review of the NWT Housing Corporation's housing policies must take place. The way clients are treated must be reviewed, as the front-line workers are a reflection of our values as elected leaders. Does the Minister agree with this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Client service is a priority of mine, and one of the studies and reviews that we did, we conducted one in Fort Smith at the local housing authority, and the number of discoveries that we had through that led to client service improvement. This is an approach that I would like to exercise throughout the Northwest Territories, looking at all 23 LHOs and LHAs throughout the Northwest Territories and having this review done, and bringing that back to the table so that we can identify significant improvement at the local community level. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 657-19(2):
LAND TENURE AND HOME OWNERSHIP

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 23, 2014, an agreement was signed between the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and the Government of the Northwest Territories to transfer the corporation's 838 lots in fee simple title. This was going to be done for \$1, Mr. Speaker. My question for the Minister of Lands is: how many of those leases have lease transferred since signing the agreement in 2014?

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sixteen. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: In a 2007 business plan, the department committed to a streamlined land

management system to transfer leases to fee simple title where appropriate and to continue to transfer municipal lands to municipal governments. What I would give to have completed the work in the 2007 business plan. I don't understand why we have only transferred 16 of the 832 leases. Can the Minister explain what is the barrier in transferring these leases?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I can't tell you about 2007. I wasn't even in politics there. I'm glad the Member has been able to find those resources, but the barriers we're facing right now is that we need to consult with our Indigenous governments. That is part of our process. We need to respect our Indigenous governments; we need to consult. The Member is aware, we have 697 housing leases right now, and the departments have been meeting, Lands and housing, to decide on what we're trying to do. We're working on multiple dwelling units of 179 units.

MR. JOHNSON: I well recognize we need to consult with Indigenous governments. However, I want to note the majority of people in our public housing are Indigenous. One of the biggest problems in our territory that Indigenous people face is lack of housing. Fee simple title begins to create markets. It allows the Housing Corporation to build more units. Is the Minister committed, as per the 2014 agreement, to transferring all of the Housing Corporation leases to them in fee simple title?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I wish I could do it like that. We have a process, and we are working with the NWT Housing Corporation. They have asked us to focus on multi-family units, which is 179. We are working on those. The Member is aware, we just had a recent conversation, and we are in the process of going through that plan of how we are dealing with it. If it's one at a time, we are going to be doing that, but we are working with the NWT Housing Corporation to do this. It's not just Lands. I understand the Member's passion about these things, but again, please allow this Member to understand that we need to consult with Indigenous governments. Please, we need to do that job. If that Member wants to not consult with them, please tell us.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My actual preference would be that we give all of our Housing Corporation units to Indigenous governments along with the funding, but I will save that for the Housing Corporation Minister. I heard the Minister say we are trying to transfer 179 units to the Housing Corporation in fee simple. Do we

have a timeline for when that will be done? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: There is a process. The timeline is: as fast as we can get it done, we will do it. Just so people understand, the consultation process takes 90 days, plus with COVID, we add another 30 days. We need to do those things. We are working with the NWT Housing Corporation. We are working with Indigenous governments. We are trying to get this fee simple. The Member is right. In 2014, we agreed to transfer it for a dollar to the NWT Housing Corporation to get it done. We are going to work as fast as we can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 658-19(2):
HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, and my first question is: has the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation defined their ideal partnership? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not too sure about the ideal partnership, but we have had significant headway with the Indigenous groups in looking at housing delivery throughout the Northwest Territories. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, the Housing Corporation has been working with the co-investment fund and rapid rehousing program that the federal government has offered for the Northwest Territories.

With that, the Housing Corporation has hired staff to travel throughout the Northwest Territories. The last number that I had checked that I had personally travelled with the president, we had visited approximately 17 communities out of the 33 throughout the Northwest Territories. Once we did hire a person to work with CMHC with the national co-investment fund to encourage applications not only from Indigenous groups, but also from stakeholders throughout the Northwest Territories, businesses, and non-profit organizations in order for them to acquire the funding.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is open to several partnerships. If we can get houses on the ground and are able to work with our partners throughout the Northwest Territories, including Indigenous,

then I am open, as a Minister, to have those conversations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: I am happy that the Minister mentioned Indigenous-owned housing options in the Northwest Territories. Is the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation currently supporting any Indigenous-owned, but Northwest Territories Housing Corporation-operated housing options or projects in the Northwest Territories to increase public housing stock?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: The Housing Corporation has had a number of conversations throughout the territory in regard to transfer of units that we do have and market housing units, as well, and looking at partnerships dealing with residents who are entering into eviction. We have supported them through our Northern Pathways program throughout the Northwest Territories; our homelessness initiatives throughout the territory, and shelters, as well; looking at transitioning our tenants into home ownership.

Most of all, Mr. Speaker, I really want to weigh heavy on the co-investment fund, because that is the program that really ties the Housing Corporation with the Indigenous groups and with the bands and Indigenous governments throughout the territory, in order for them to engage in public housing and deliver housing programs, as well. Also, Mr. Speaker, the Housing Corporation is available to be working with the Indigenous groups, as well, in how to program deliver low-cost-income housing.

MS. CLEVELAND: The co-investment fund is very exciting. I agree with the Minister that this is a great opportunity for partnership in the Northwest Territories. I am wondering if the Minister of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will commit to engaging with all relevant stakeholders, including northern business and Indigenous organizations, to create a policy foundation for a private-public housing partnerships in the Northwest Territories?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: I would have to follow up with the Member to elaborate on this policy, because as the housing Minister, I don't feel that we need a policy in order for us to engage into partnership. I think that the federal government has provided enough funding adequately presently for the Northwest Territories to be entering into partnership and supporting these applications as we go forward. I will follow up with the Member to be clearer on what type of policy she is wanting the Housing Corporation to engage with. I don't feel that we need a policy in order to engage into partnerships throughout the territory.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am always game to have any kind of chat about housing with the Minister at any time offline, for sure. One such example of this could be: earlier, I heard the Minister saying to the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes that she is open to entertaining new lease arrangements in communities in the Northwest Territories. One of the things that we run into in the NWT is that it's very, very costly for builders to come in and build housing units, especially without some form of a contract of clients on the other end. When communities largely have public housing, it would be great if builders could set up contracts with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation before the build in order to know how we are going to operate this, how we are going to work together. This is one such policy example that doesn't exist that would be really helpful to the people of the Northwest Territories to be able to get housing on the ground. I am wondering if the Minister is willing to commit to at least partnerships, then, prior to a build, with northern industry. Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you to the Member for elaborating on that and giving me more of an idea of where she is going with her questions. Throughout the territory, we do have leases in the larger centres and not specifically in the smaller communities. If there is an opportunity for us to enter into an arrangement such as this to provide low-cost-income housing throughout the territory, this is something that I would like to further on the conversation with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 659-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ARTS COUNCIL

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. It appears that the NWT Arts Council has not received the attention it deserves for the last several years. Only half the seats on the council are currently filled, with two having been appointed only in the last couple of weeks. The strategic plan ended in 2018, and much of the website is out of date. Can the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment explain what is going on with the NWT Arts Council and how it was operating with only one person on the board out of six? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A lot of things happened. We had a complete turnover in the office that deals with the arts council, and

there was no overlap of employees. In a situation like that where we have a limited public service and we don't have these big offices with a lot of lateral positions, we could run into these issues. That was an issue in getting the arts council filled with board members. We had a couple of resignations that were unexpected, but to the Member's question about how it operates with a single position, there is no requirement for a certain number of members for quorum, so even though there was a single member who was officially appointed, the other members who were in between appointments, who have been since reappointed, did participate.

In May, we are going to have a call for nominations, and we will fill the other seats. We will be back to a full board this spring, and I think the future is looking bright. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the website, this relates to the Member's other questions about the other website, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, that's also going through a refresh at the same time as part of the same process. That would be taken care of as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that, and certainly, my intention is not to embarrass anybody. I just want to make sure that we get the arts council back on track. I think part of the problem is the lack of support from the department and the way that arts seems to fall between two departments, namely Education, Culture and Employment and Industry, Tourism and Investment. Can the Minister tell us what he is doing to support the NWT Arts Council and its independence?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: We currently have staff who provide support to the arts council. As I've said, there were some operational issues last year, but things have improved. The arts council, it's a creation of policy in the Northwest Territories, and through that policy, they have a role in making recommendations to the Minister about how to distribute the arts council funding. We provide them support in doing that and support for their meetings. The best practice is: having peers review the submissions for arts funding. Because of that, when these recommendations from the arts council come to the Minister, the Minister will look at them, but essentially, they're signed off. It's not something where I'm going to go through and make my own -- say no to this artist, say yes to this artist's submission and things like that. They are arm's length in that sense. However, going forward, we have a new Arts Strategy coming out, and we want to look at ways to improve arts across the territory in any way possible. One of those ways might be looking at the possibility of enhancing the profile of the arts council, perhaps, enhancing its responsibilities, its duties, how it's governed, the support that it has, and things like that. I can leave it there.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. I'm interested in looking at best practices, as well. I think some of those best practices are shown in other Canadian jurisdictions, including British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, Newfoundland and Labrador. Their arts councils are equivalent; they're actually established through legislation. We've got a policy that dates from 1989 that sets up our arts council. Will the Minister commit to reviewing this situation and bring forward legislation to formally establish the NWT Arts Council as an independent body?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: No, I won't make that commitment. However, like I said, this is something that we're looking into.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I was hoping for a yes there, but a firm no is okay sometimes. He's looking into it; that's a good start. The strategic plan developed by the Northwest Territories Arts Council ended in 2018. We're still in a pandemic, but I think there's tremendous potential here for a rebound in tourism. I'd like to know from the Minister what role does he think the Northwest Territories Arts Council, and arts more generally, can play in economic recovery? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Of course, the responsibility for arts in the Northwest Territories lies with Education, Culture and Employment, and the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment has more of a focus on the economic side. That being said, it is a partnership. When we bring forward the new Arts Strategy, there will be a focus on ensuring that the supports that we're providing are supporting artists to help generate income to help build the economy. We're going to have measurements in the strategy to ensure that this is actually happening. We don't want to just throw money out and hope that it's working. We want to make sure that it's working.

I think that there are tremendous possibilities for the arts in the Northwest Territories, right from the large sort of festivals that we have that can generate tourism and income, right down to the individual artist who might be beating at home. We want to ensure that those artists are supported. To that end, we are going to look at all of the programs that we're offering, all of the funding that we're offering, and going to determine: is this really supporting that goal? This is the way that the government operates now. In addition to that, we also have the government renewal initiative, and Education, Culture and Employment is first up for that initiative, as well. We're really going to be looking at our programs and making sure we are focusing them

and delivering the most benefit that we can for the people of the territory and for the economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Member for Nunakput.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 25-19(2): MEDEVACS IN NUNAKPUT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Medical evacuations (medevacs) are required for residents to move quickly and safely between medical facilities when their medical needs are greater than what can be provided at the originating medical facility. For many communities, this requires an air medevac. My question for the Minister of Health and Social Services is:

1. How many medevacs, broken down by community and fiscal year, have taken place in the Beaufort-Delta;
2. What is the number, by community and calendar year, of medevacs that have been delayed and the reason for that delay, be it that no plane was available, no nursing staff were available, no pilots were available, or any other reason due to weather, natural occurrence, or human factors;
3. What is the average response time from when a medevac is called to when it arrives in the community and when it arrives at the final destination; and
4. What provisions exist in the medevac service provider contract for spare aircraft for the Beaufort-Delta, and are those aircraft identified in the contract by their tail registration numbers?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 11, Petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Member for Kam Lake.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 12-19(2): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF BILL 20 - AN ACT TO AMEND THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Standing Committee on Social Development is pleased to provide its Report on the Review of Bill 20: An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act and recommends it to the House.

Introduction

Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act, was introduced by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. This bill seeks to add two new provisions into the Employment Standards Act. The first provision is intended to provide protection to Northwest Territories workers by introducing emergency leave provisions that will allow workers to access unpaid leave when they are unable to perform their duties due to an emergency.

The second area is intended to provide flexibility to NWT employers by including an exception to the requirement for employers to provide a certain period of notice prior to a group termination.

Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act, received second reading in the Legislative Assembly and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development on November 4, 2020. The public hearing with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment was held on February 10, 2021. The clause-by-clause review was held on March 2, 2021.

With the Minister's agreement, a substantive motion to amend Bill 20 was passed during the clause-by-clause review. The work of the committee on the review of this bill including amendments are discussed below, along with stakeholder comments and recommended actions.

Public Review of Bill 20

The Standing Committee on Social Development undertook a four-month review of Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act. This review provided the Standing Committee on Social Development a valuable opportunity to hear from community members, organized labour groups, groups representing the interests of vulnerable populations, and law professionals outside of government.

Committee would like to thank these stakeholders for taking the time to provide their important feedback and for raising areas of great consideration regarding the potential impacts this bill may have on the NWT, employees, and employers. Committee received three written submissions from stakeholders (attached in appendix A). They were:

- Status of Women Council of the NWT ("the Status of Women");

- The Union of Northern Workers ("the UNW"); and
- Marshall Law Barrister and Solicitor.

Public input has been included in greater detail under the topic headings below. Mr. Speaker, I will now pass the reading of the report on to the MLA for Great Slave. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Emergency Leave

Broadly speaking, committee members and stakeholders welcomed the introduction of emergency leave provisions into the Employment Standards Act. Committee recognizes the employees may need more than the current yearly minimum of five days of sick leave, without pay. With the addition of emergency leave, workers will have access to unpaid leave in the event of an emergency, such as the ongoing COVID-19 emergency, when they are unable to perform their duties.

Emergency Leave - What it Means

Employees will be entitled to unpaid "emergency leave" when a government agency has declared an emergency, defined as:

- a) a state of emergency declared under Section 14 of the Emergency Management Act or a state of local emergency declared under Section 18 of that act;
- b) a state of public health emergency declared under Section 32 of the Public Health Act;
- c) a direction or order of a public health officer, the Chief Public Health Officer or a deputy chief public health officer provided or made under the Public Health Act; or
- d) an emergency declared under the Emergencies Act (Canada).

Emergency Leave - Employment Standards Regulations

Bill 20 allows the Department of Education, Culture and Employment ("the department") to prescribe an emergency in the Employment Standards Regulations to access emergency leave when the state of emergency has ended. If there is an emergency affecting a family member of an employee, the employee is entitled to the leave when:

- a) the circumstance results in a situation where the family member of the employee requires care, childcare, or assistance;
- b) the employee is the person most reasonably able under the circumstances to provide the family member with the required care, childcare, or assistance; and
- c) providing the required care, childcare, or assistance to the family member has the effect of preventing the employee from performing the duties of their employment.

In their plain language summary explaining emergency leave amendments, the department states, if an emergency exists due to a pandemic of a reportable disease, an employee will be able to access the leave when the employee is unable to work because:

- they are under medical investigation/supervision/treatment related to the reportable disease;
- they are required to self-isolate or quarantine related to the reportable disease because of the direction of a health officer, healthcare professional, or government agency;
- they were directed by the employer not to work due to a concern that the employee could expose others to the reportable disease in the workplace;
- they are required to care for a family member or dependent who is affected by the reportable disease; or
- they are directly affected by travel restrictions related to the emergency, depending on the circumstances.

Emergency leave does not require an employee to have worked for an employer for any set amount of time to be eligible. The period of leave would end when the employee is no longer unable to work for the reasons above or when the emergency ends. Emergency leave also does not require a doctor's note.

Mr. Speaker, I will now pass the reading of the report to the MLA for the Deh Cho. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

What We Heard

Emergency Leave – Unpaid

Submissions from the both the Status of Women Council and the UNW emphasize there are concerns for potential undue financial hardships caused by mandatory unpaid emergency leave. Both organizations support the use of government resources to provide paid emergency leave to employees. The Status of Women advise the need for paid emergency leave was very important for employees to able to continue to take care of their loved ones:

".... Employees need to be able to take paid sick leave to care for 'individuals,' defined as an immediate family member, someone living with the employee, or someone with whom the employee has a relationship with an expectation of care. This is particularly impactful for LGBTQ workers and workers with a disability, who often have varied family forms and need paid leave that allows them to care for their loved ones."

The UNW provided examples from the COVID-19 pandemic stating, "this situation illustrates very clearly the financial hardship many workers face when they are unable to work because of emergency measures such as mandatory self-isolation or quarantine... especially when workers are unable to work for extended periods of time."

The UNW expressed concern that supporting documents suggested employees could access emergency federal benefits while on emergency leave, even though current benefits are set to expire September 2021. The UNW went on to suggest the department undertake public consultation prior to prescribing an emergency within the Employment Standards Regulations:

"....it is important that the public and key stakeholders are given the opportunity to provide input in the development of any regulations where the department intends to 'prescribe' an emergency under Section 30.3."

Emergency Leave - Too COVID-19 Specific

In their submission, Marshall Law Barrister and Solicitor commented that emergency leave criteria as set out in Bill 20 was too narrow and appeared to be specifically related to addressing COVID-19. They also suggested the department provide scenarios for when employees are entitled to access emergency leave.

Mr. Speaker, I will now pass the reading of the report to the MLA for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Committee Response

Committee supports the recommendations received from stakeholders to have the department investigate policy or program amendments intended to provide temporary unpaid leave supports to employees to reduce financial hardship. Committee also feels it is important for the department to undertake public consultation and engagement regarding prescribed emergency leave regulations.

Accordingly, the committee makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Department of Education, Culture and Employment undertake public consultation to develop prescribed emergency provisions, including those that have already been defined in relevant sections of Bill 20.

Recommendation 2

To address undue financial hardship as a result of mandated emergency leave requirements, the Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Department of Education, Culture and Employment undertake a review of territorial government programs and policies to allow financial resources to be made available while an employee is required to take unpaid emergency leave.

Advanced Notice of Group Termination

Committee recognizes and appreciates the number of challenges employers face when businesses are forced to shut down, especially in circumstances that are beyond their control. Committee is also aware employers face serious legal challenges when they do not meet their responsibilities under the act to provide proper termination notice to employees when these circumstances arise. However, committee members are concerned about the negative impacts on employees if legislation is too heavily in favour of the employer.

To address concerns, committee moved a substantial motion requiring the Employment Standards Officer to provide a decision on waivers and improved the vague language first presented in the bill that did not clearly interpret the Employment Standard Officer's responsibilities. The motion ensures a copy of a decision is served, with the reasons for or against approving a waiver, to an employer and any trade unions of which employees may be members. Committee's motion also included new clauses for employers to, without delay, make reasonable efforts to provide a copy of notice to employees who will be terminated and to provide a copy of the notice to employees when it is not possible to post notice.

Mr. Speaker, I will now pass the reading of the report to the MLA for Hay River South. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Waiving Advanced Notice for Group Termination – What it Means

Bill 20 provides an exception clause permitting employers demonstrating an inability to provide group termination notice due to a significant unexpected event that prevents the employer from respecting the notice period in the act. Under the existing act, the period of required notice ranges from four to 16 weeks, depending on the number of employees affected. In situations where employers do not follow this required period of notice may be guilty of an offence and liable or summary conviction.

Bill 20 provides exceptions that would only apply when an employer is required to terminate the employment of a group of employees as a result of a circumstance or event beyond their control, such as the destruction or major breakdown of machinery or equipment, climatic or economic conditions, or emergencies, including a public health emergency:

- the circumstances that prevented the employer from providing notice must have been truly beyond the employer's control;
- the employer must have exercised due diligence to foresee and avoid the cause of termination; and
- the cause of termination must prevent the employer from respecting the periods of notice set out in act.

Within the proposed bill, the employer is still required to provide notice of the group termination to the Employment Standards Officer and to any trade union of which the employees may be members as soon as possible. Once notice is received, the Employment Standards Officer determines if the exception applies to circumstances preventing employers from providing notice to employees within the periods of notice set out in the act.

What We Heard

Waiving Advanced Notice for Group Termination – Employment Standards Officer

In their submission to committee on Bill 20, the UNW emphasize there is a lack of clear language within the proposed exemption clause. The UNW

also felt the interpretation of this clause could be perceived as protecting the needs and rights of the employer over the rights of workers and their union representatives. Additionally, they stated the unclear language describing the broad interpretation exemption criteria provided the potential for abuse. They stated:

"The UNW is struggling to understand the rationale for adding a clause specifically exempting employers from notifying designated authorities and workers' unions when they intend to circumvent the advance notice requirements of a group termination. The employer is still obligated to notify its workers, and the UNW fails to see how, in the age of electronic communication, notifying additional parties presents a burden or undue hardship. On the surface, this section appears to remove any government oversight from the process and strip collective agreement protections from unionized workers."

Committee expressed similar concerns upon their review of Bill 20. To increase legislative balance within Bill 20 for both employees' and employers' rights, committee moved the several motions amending Bill 20. The motions can be found in appendix C.

Mr. Speaker, I will now pass the reading of the report to the MLA for Kam Lake. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Conclusion

Following the clause-by-clause review, a substantial motion was carried to report Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act, to ensure there are emergency leave provisions for workers in the act and provisions to waive advanced notice for group termination during circumstances beyond an employer's control. This concludes the standing committee's review of Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act.

MOTION TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORT 12-19(2) AND MOVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Committee Report 12-19(2), Standing Committee on Social Development Report on the Review of Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act, be received by the Assembly and

moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. The motion is in order and is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

The report will be moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 348-19(2):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 3,
2020-2021

TABLED DOCUMENT 349-19(2):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS
EXPENDITURES), NO. 3, 2020-2021

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: "Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2020-2021;" and "Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2020-2021." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Honourable Premier.

TABLED DOCUMENT 350-19(2):
2019-2023 MANDATE OF THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ANNUAL
STATUS REPORT

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, "2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories Annual Status Report." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Tabling of documents. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

TABLED DOCUMENT 351-19(2):
WASTE REDUCTION AND RECOVERY
PROGRAM 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, "Waste Reduction and Recovery Program 2019-2020 Annual Report." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Member for Frame Lake.

TABLED DOCUMENT 352-19(2):
HUSKY OIL OPERATIONS LIMITED
EXPLORATION LICENSE (CONSOLIDATED) NO.
EL494

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I wish to table had following document, "Husky Oil Exploration Licence No. EL494." Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notice of motion. Colleagues, we will continue after a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome back, Members. Item 8, notices of motion. Item 9, motions. Member for Kam Lake.

Motions

MOTION 30-19(2):
ACTIONS FOR IMPROVED HOUSING
OUTCOMES,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. WHEREAS the 2019 NWT community survey found that over 42 percent of dwellings in the Northwest Territories had at least one housing problem, an increase of 10 percent since 2009;

AND WHEREAS housing problems can be issues of affordability, adequacy, or suitability;

AND WHEREAS this affects every community in the territory, including small communities, regional centres, and Yellowknife;

AND WHEREAS the administration of housing is not consistent between communities;

AND WHEREAS the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation mission statement is focused on housing stock, but is silent on the social program outcomes;

AND WHEREAS there has been no meaningful addition to the amount of public housing in the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS housing plays an integral role in the well-being of residents and public housing needs to take an integrated view of the needs of its tenants as clients;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that this Legislative Assembly calls upon the Government of the Northwest Territories to prioritize the review of

the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation as part of the Government Renewal Initiative;

AND FURTHER, that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation update its mission statement and policies to reflect its role in social wellness;

AND FURTHERMORE, that Northwest Territories Housing Corporation must include referrals to appropriate government programs prior to beginning the eviction process;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. To the motion. I will allow the Member to speak. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, laced throughout my Member's statements over the past year have been persistent concerns that housing is far more than a commodity. Housing is a human right recognized by the United Nations, both generally, in regard to sustainable development, and specifically, as it relates to Indigenous people, captured in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Housing is a public good. It is the centre of thriving communities and the health and well-being of people and society regardless of ethnicity or income. The central role of housing in society is not only recognized by habitat in the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, but also in this House by this Assembly. Discussions of housing, its importance, and its place in community wellness unites the 19th Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, there is good reason for this centrality of housing. From an environmental perspective, we are on a collision course with climate change while more than 40 percent of the carbon footprint comes from buildings, mostly housing. To be honest, Mr. Speaker, the numbers are probably higher because of the energy intensity of insulation products, the long-distance transport of construction material, the cost of heating and diesel-fired electricity throughout the service life of a house, and the requirement of oil-fired vehicles to get to any public services in most of our communities. Community planning and housing design must be responsive to this rapidly changing environment if we want to protect the health of our planet.

From a social perspective, a safe, secure, and healthy home is essential to family life. It is the family that informs our lifestyle choices and decisions from the day we are born until the day we die. Our prosperity, if not our very survival, as people and communities depend on good choices,

which will stand the test of global economy and allow our communities to provide viable housing options. Housing is not a commodity, like a house. Housing is a public good: a home. Accessibility to everything that dignifies humanity starts in the home. The home supports conversations with people we trust about things that matter to us. It keeps us healthy, and when we are sick, it gives us the best place to get well. Housing provides a passport to health, clean water, education, and our participation in governance and the economy.

From a governance perspective, the quality of our citizenship starts with housing. The basic ethic of a compassionate, caring society is one where no one gets left behind. Housing equity dignifies us, and from that place of dignity, we participate in decision-making in a social democracy, where personal interests give sway to the common good. In this Chamber, I have spoken about people whose return to their birth community has been frustrated by our housing program. I have spoken about vulnerable persons who have been evicted when they were prime candidates for integrated support systems. Housing programs failed to provide it. I have spoken to the fundamental relationships between housing and environmental, social, and economic well-being. I have spoken to systemic racism and its overpowering manifestation in homelessness.

There is good reason, Mr. Speaker, for the centrality of housing. There is no good reason, Mr. Speaker, that we are not providing it. Homelessness is the shadow side of homefulness, a term we rarely hear in housing discussions. Homefulness, as explained by Marilyn Hamilton, captures how access to the many levels of nested services fuels success. The flip side of homefulness is homelessness: society's punishment for people's inability to fit within the limited range of services connected through a bureaucratic system. The existing mission statement of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation speaks to acquiring, building, and maintaining housing stock, but remains silent on its role in the social wellness of Northerners. There is no strategic plan to increase housing stock in the Northwest Territories, and there is no policy structure to either change how this government provides housing or supports housing partnerships.

Mr. Speaker, what we are looking for through this motion is a housing program that is people-centred and built around the wellness of Northerners. To be consistent and forward-looking, it must be underpinned by a comprehensive policy, flexible action plan, prudent investment strategy, and set of performance measures that capture the values of care and compassion for people, planet, and prosperity. The housing program must be built in

partnership by all its stakeholders bound by a common purpose.

The attempt to achieve housing as a public good won't be perfect. In fact, progress depends on us learning continuously as we innovate and keep at it, but that means we need to be prepared to try new things and step outside of the cyclical history of housing the NWT. The 2019 NWT community survey found that over 42 percent of NWT dwellings had at least one housing problem. This represents a 10 percent increase from a decade earlier and tells us that our cycle is not serving us. Excellence in housing is a process, not a final destination. Just like we renovate our houses to suit our changing world, we will renovate our housing program, but we must start now to ensure that it choreographs all of the interrelated issues and brings together and all of government approach to achieve success. Housing is embedded in our community life and housing is not a silo. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. We'll allow the seconder, and then we will open it up to everyone. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Housing is a basic need for all. Many people in every community of our territory are living in housing that is below standards. Many lack housing altogether. Indigenous people are at higher rate than anyone else in this territory who are struggling with homelessness. How do we expect our residents to overcome any issues we raise in this House like mental health, addictions, low levels of education, graduation rates, poor health outcomes, high numbers of our Indigenous males incarcerated, high rates of family violence? If no one has a home, we will never overcome these. If I could go back to the first week of this Legislative Assembly when we were coming up with our priorities, I would have said one: housing. Housing to ensure that every resident has a place to live that meets their needs and their circumstances that they are living with. With that, Mr. Speaker, I fully support this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. We will now open it up for discussion. To the motion. Government House Leader.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier, we heard the Premier and the housing Minister speak passionately about housing, and I'm sure that most, if not all, Members of Cabinet are on the record expressing similar sentiments. This government understands the importance of ensuring our residents, and especially our most vulnerable residents, have access to appropriate housing, and we're committed to a whole-of-government approach, an integrated whole-of-government approach, to delivering services. That

said, in our system of government, it is convention that Cabinet abstain from motions that make recommendations to Cabinet, so we will be abstaining. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Government House Leader. To the motion. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the mover and the seconder for the work that they've done to bring forward the motion. Housing has always been a priority for me in the last Assembly and this one. I just want to talk a little bit about what happened in the last Assembly without reliving it all. Certainly, the last Cabinet, I just never had the feeling that housing was a top priority for them. Whenever they went to Ottawa it was about roads. Housing just was never really the highest priority, and I think that was demonstrated when the National Housing Strategy was announced the allocations amongst jurisdictions. Nunavut, I think even the Yukon, got more money than we did because we didn't have a case put together; we didn't make the case in Ottawa. I think that has changed with this Cabinet. That's my suspicion, but I think I've seen some of that work. We just have to have the case ready. We have to have the ask ready to go to Ottawa and make that the priority when we go to Ottawa. It's not about, sorry, big infrastructure projects; it's about housing. That's what our government needs to focus on. I want to thank the mover and the seconder again, and I support this motion. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. To the motion. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the mover and the seconder for this motion, as well. Lots of work went into this. When I was thinking about everything that was being said, I thought about all the conversations each and every one of us had yesterday, when we did our door-to-door and our campaigning; the majority of the concerns were about housing. I've sat in those living rooms where it was worried parents that worried about the maintenance of a house, worried they might lose their house. Even talking to some people out in public, they don't have a home. Just heart-wrenching issues that we have to deal with and listen to and hear. I think, with this motion, it shows that we are doing some real work as a whole. I'm hoping that we can get through this productively and work with each other. It's all about synergy and working cooperatively with each other. Partnerships are huge and not just in here, outside with Indigenous governments, with municipalities, with hamlets. This issue is not just in this Chamber, it's outside of this Chamber. We all have to work with each other. I'm hoping that we can move in a

good, positive way here. With that, I would like to say I support this motion. Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. To the motion. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to thank the mover and seconder on the motion in regard to housing. My communities in Nunakput, we're really short units for young families who are coming up across the Delta. The houses that we have that were built in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s that retrofits need to be done. I think something that working together with our government to get this done finally. We have people living in makeshift shacks because they've been evicted, waiting for housing. There are no houses available, market housing is not available in our communities. I think this is a step forward and working together to get the housing situation under control in the Beaufort-Delta and across the territory. I will be supporting the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I said earlier, housing is very important to people in the Northwest Territories, especially those who don't have it and they have nowhere to turn. It's important that we listen to them and listen to the solutions that they provide. I go into the communities, and the other day, I heard someone say, "Even if I had a tent frame, I'd be happy." Those are the type of things that people are looking for. They're just looking for something that they can call their own so that they can get the rest they need and to hopefully advance their life and make their family lives better as well. What we need from this government is action. I've watched this government over the years, and we give a lot of lip service. It's not just the government; it's people out there, as well. We all have to participate whether we're in government or not. People want to see action.

We talk about fixing houses up and that, but at the end of the day, we need more units. That's all there is to it. However we get them, I don't really care. Whether we in Hay River, if we get the high rise going, there is 122 units. If the Minister is able to get the units from the federal government, there is probably another dozen there. It will help people out. To give people a chance at life, to give children a chance at life, we have to stop the BS and actually get out there and work to make things happen. We don't need a whole bunch more studies, we've got enough. I was going through the things today. You look at 2016, there is one. You look back earlier, and it just goes on and on. It is the same stuff, the numbers change a little bit, and

that's it. I support this motion, and I am really pleased with the Cabinet Members and Members on this side. I think we all realize that housing is a priority, and if we can do something with housing, it will really impact the people of the Northwest Territories lives in a positive way. That's all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. To the motion. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Housing is an issue not only in the North, but across Canada. If there is one thing that my career and my time in engineering in the North has taught me is that we are already even further behind the eight ball than when compared to southern Canada due to the lack of northern understanding of cold climate engineering. I, too, support this motion. I thank my colleagues for bringing it forward. Before taking on this job, housing was not something I thought a lot about, except for the fact that one of my proudest moments was the acquisition of my own home, and it proves to be my sanctuary and my place of refuge and safety. As I said in my statement, until you have that, you can't combat a lot of the issues you may be facing. To me, I really support housing. I also still support large infrastructure projects and roads, and I think we can do them all. I commit to working with my colleagues on getting this done. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This motion specifically asks for a mandate review and a structural review of the Housing Corporation because, in all honesty, not much has changed since we took over a lot of the housing from CMHC. I don't think this is to blame the staff at the Housing Corporation. The reality is they are underfunded, and I think we need to step back, look at our entire budget, and find more ways to invest in housing because it ultimately saves us money. When I look at the Health and Social Services budget and I see that it is \$596 million and I look at the Housing Corporation budget and I see that it is \$118 million, I think something is out of whack.

Mr. Speaker, this happens because many other departments, as the needs have increased, their budgets have increased, but the Housing Corporation, for whatever reason, lack of political will, their budget has largely stagnated, the number of public housing units they have on the ground has stagnated. As such, every single year our housing crisis has gotten worse. This is going to take a serious review of that mandate to make sure that that housing stock is maintained and increased, and it is going to take a structural review such that

we don't find ourselves with consecutive budget after budget where the Housing Corporation is left as a last resort, as opposed to the needs of other departments. I believe that this Cabinet and this Minister are committed to doing that work, I believe that Regular MLAs are committed to doing this work, but there is clearly a structural problem when, after decades, we have not added new housing units. In fact, every single year, the Housing Corporation and the housing crisis worsens in this territory, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. To the motion. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank my colleagues for their support of this motion today. I really appreciate it. I know that it's something that we discuss a lot together and that we discuss with compassion and also with passion, and so I really appreciate the time the Members have invested in the collaborative conversations that we have. Mr. Speaker, I would like to request a recorded vote today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. The Member is requesting a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): The Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Hay River South, the Member for Thebacha, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): The Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Sahtu, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Hay River North, the Member for Yellowknife South, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The results of the recorded vote: 10 in favour, zero opposed, seven abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motions. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Member for Nunakput.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 23:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC UTILITIES ACT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. The motion is in order and is non-debatable. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 23 has had first reading. 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; 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(2) Main Estimates 2021-2022; Tabled Document 348-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2020-2021; and Tabled Document 349-19(2), Supplementary Estimates

(Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2020-2021. 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 will now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. Committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022, NWT Housing Corporation. Marsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will proceed with the first item. We have agreed to consider Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is included in the capital estimates as an information item, and the totals are not voteable. We will continue to review these estimates as we have for the previously considered departments; however, we will not vote on the totals. If Members have comments or questions, they can be raised at the appropriate time. Does the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation have any opening remarks?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I do. I am here to present the 2021-2022 Main Estimates for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Overall, the corporation's estimates propose an increase of \$9.1 million, or 8.3 percent, over the Main Estimates 2021-2022. These estimates support the mandate objectives for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation while continuing to meet the Government of the Northwest Territories' fiscal objectives to prioritize responsible and strategic spending.

Highlights of these proposed estimates include:

- An additional \$5 million from the Government of the Northwest Territories to support Northwest Territories housing projects approved under Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's National Co-Investment Fund program;
- \$1.8 million for the launch of the new Canada-NWT Housing Benefit program;

- \$1.7 million increased investment in the corporation's community housing support program and funding to support the hiring of a new term community housing planner position to assist with the delivery of community housing plans for NWT communities;
- An additional \$109,000 of incremental forced growth funding to assist in addressing inflationary cost increases within the corporation's emergency shelters program.

These estimates continue to support the priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly by:

- Fostering strategic partnerships, including those with the federal and Indigenous governments, to increase the number of affordable homes and reduce core housing needs, especially for seniors and vulnerable persons;
- Reduce the cost of power by investing in energy efficient solutions for both new construction and repairs; and
- Delivering increased opportunities for homeownership.

That concludes my opening remarks, Madam Chair. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Does the Minister wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes, I do, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Will the Minister please introduce her witnesses for the record?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Today, I have with me president, Mr. Tom Williams, and vice-president, Mr. Jim Martin. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Welcome. The committee has agreed to forgo general comments. Does the 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 community housing services starting on page 372. Questions? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. Just listening to opening remarks, and one of the key things that stood out for me when I was reviewing this was the

utilities line of \$25,230,000. That's quite a high amount. There're a lot of units that need to be, you have to think of power, heat, and maintenance to keep these units properly for our residents. I heard the Minister mention that there were some initiatives to make these units more efficient. Can the Minister just explain what type of initiatives are in place to try to keep this line item down in the future? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Looking at the environmental initiatives that we do have, I'll have Mr. Jim Martin to elaborate on the initiatives that we've been proposing for the Housing Corporation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. As the Minister mentioned, we do have a number of initiatives under way within the Housing Corporation. To identify some of the areas, first off, we would want to recognize that each year, the Housing Corporation makes a significant investment in our capital plan each year. What we do in that process, we do deliver units that are energy efficient, and we deliver units that exceed the National Building Code standards by about 25 percent, so we continue to do that. Within this capital plan that we do deliver every year, there's approximately \$3 million of energy components that we do invest both in the new construction and also in our modernization, renovation, repair projects.

In addition to our regular capital plan delivery, the Housing Corporation always looks for opportunities to invest in alternative energy projects. This year, within the next week or two, we are going to be hopefully awarding a tender for a major biomass project here in Yellowknife. It's going to involve 53 housing units. We're converting 45 oil fire furnaces over to biomass, and we're hooking up actually this system to a new eight-plex singles building that we're delivering in town, as well. It's a major project, and we're certainly looking forward to seeing the greenhouse gas emission offsets as well as the added efficiencies that will come from that investment. In addition, we continue to explore other partnership opportunities. We have entered into a partnership in the past with Arctic Energy Alliance, and one of our staff members within our infrastructure division is the vice-president, actually, on that board. We're very involved in their initiatives.

We also continue to support our energy efficiency retrofits with other parties, as well. The Housing Corporation is supporting a number of operating

agreements with our third-party housing providers. We refer to them as unilaterals, and those are groups that we inherited the operating agreements from when we entered into the 1999 Social Housing Agreement, and we continue to work with a number of partners. This example would be like Avens, for example, North Slave Housing Corporation here in Yellowknife, TP Housing, and others. We continue to provide them with energy efficiency investments for their operations, as well.

Most recently, I would also want to note that we've worked closely with the Hamlet of Aklavik and supported them with their biomass project. We hooked up a number of our public housing units to their system to ensure that it was sustainable. Finally, just a summary piece: in the last 10 years, the Housing Corporation has invested in seven photovoltaic solar systems as well as five biomass projects in other communities, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks for that response. You've checked off a lot of the questions I was additionally going to have, too. I think that my colleague from the Deh Cho is probably going to ask some questions about the biomass. We'll see, though. Just to make sure that this line item here, how it's trending, because we don't have a full picture of this. Will the Minister be able to give us a sense if this line item has been going up or going down, or is it pretty much staying level? If, like I said, from what I'm hearing is true, then it should be trending downwards. We don't have a full picture, so can the Minister just give us kind of a snapshot of the last five years of how this line item is trending? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. This line item consists of partnerships as well, so I will have Mr. Martin elaborate on that line item because it does look like it's fluctuating. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Comparing the actuals to the 2020-2021 Main Estimates, you will see that there was an increase in the actuals in 2019-2020 compared to budget. The reason for that is that we continue to work closely with all the hamlets, community governments. Through a review that we undertook, actually started a couple of years ago, but working with the communities, there were a number of

invoices, actually, that were identified that were not submitted. There was a catch-up adjustment in 2019-2020, and we consider that to be a one-time. Going forward, you'll start to see that total expenditure going down to the current budget.

Now, previously, looking historically, the power bill of the Housing Corporation actually was quite a bit higher. It was about \$1.5 million higher, I believe, a few years ago. The Housing Corporation does continue to work closely with our tenants to provide support and education in terms of energy efficiency. We've also, over the last few years, have adjusted the power rates to equate to residential rates, and that was an initiative to support self-sufficiency. It also brought with it a number of benefits. The power consumption compared to a few years ago has dropped quite a bit. It's about 10 to 20 percent, actually, in some areas where we have seen the consumption drop, so it's certainly supporting on the greenhouse gas emissions front.

Through that education piece that I mentioned, we will continue to work closely with our tenants and work with our partners, Arctic Energy Alliance, as an example, to continue to support our tenants in our energy efficiency practices. The Housing Corporation, in terms of our power, it was mentioned previously that we do continue to invest a significant portion of our available resources into both modernization and improvement projects. We have done some case studies, and we found that post a renovation, a major renovation, we have seen our utility costs drop up to 30 percent. There are certainly some benefits coming from those, as well. We will continue to closely monitor these utilities and bring forward those investments as we move forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. If you could, just tighten up your responses. The Members only get 10 minutes, so that was only two questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for those very thorough answers. I have another quick question, a quick observation. I don't know if there is a correlation with the minor modernization and improvements and with utilities. I think the more you put into modernization and improvements and PM, preventative maintenance, I think you are going to start to see these utilities go down, but is that what is happening here in that line item, that increase from just recent years? There seems to be an increase for the minor modernization and improvements, if the Minister can answer that? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Jim Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The increases in modernization and improvements, yes, will certainly support energy efficiency going forward. Included in this increase is an extra investment of \$1.3 million for an additional approximately 100 energy efficient fuel tank replacements for the coming year, and we also continue to support our local housing organizations with a number of MMI, minor repairs to our units, as well, which also contribute to improved energy efficiency. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. In regard to page 373, heating fuel, I think with the cost of that it was MTS, government owning MTS, that would be a lot better pricing from MTS to the housing authority in the smaller communities that we represent, making it more feasible for the LHOs to buy cheaper fuel for local housing authorities. That being said, the water and sanitation, we asked over four or five months ago in regard to increasing water for the communities. The mayor of Tuktoyaktuk asked for water. They wanted increases because of so many people living in a house, five to 10 people in a five-bedroom unit. We take care of our own in regard to couch surfing, too, and they get water every two days. Why aren't they able to increase the water supplement for the communities? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank you, Member, for your comment. Looking at the increase of water delivery, I will bring this back to my department and follow up with the mayor, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. In regard to minor modernization and improvements, I brought up this week my local housing authorities in regard to windows and doors. If the wind is blowing right, they are getting snow piles inside. Materials that are coming in during the summer, and we have a short summer season to get all of the work done. Having to bring somebody into the community, like, for getting that work completed on time, just making sure that it's local people who are able to do that, with the local companies instead of bringing outsiders in, that has been a problem with what we

have been dealing with up in Nunakput. I have been hearing from my local contractors. That has to stop, and they have to start utilizing local businesses. As for the flooring, again, I brought up the other day people in Paulatuk having to put a blanket down so that they don't get their feet so cold because of the insulation. Not only that, it is the mould issue that we have been having in the small communities. We have been bringing it up for years. When are we going to deal with this? Is it this year, with the modernization? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I did commit to the Member that I will have the Housing Corporation visit his community to make sure that we have adequate maintenance and fixtures, I want to say, do the windows and the doors, that they are adequate for our tenants who are occupying our units. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. No. I will wait for the proper section. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under community housing services? Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. The electrical power, I know that that is always going to be an issue because we are getting the power from either Northland Utilities or NTPC, and we are still having issues there trying to get them to help the residents lower the cost of living, especially with power. I imagine they are working on strategies. I don't know if you would know about it, but whether incorporating wood-pellet boilers would help lower the electricity rates when you use hot water through on-demand heating to the units, I wonder what your thoughts are on that. Mahsi.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Energy efficiency, as I said, it is a priority when renovating and also administering our units. I can look at that, the wood-pellet boiler system, but then I need to keep in mind that, if we are able to provide this service, then which region would be able to be adequately providing the material. I would like to look at that and justify which regions this would probably work more adequately in. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: Yes. Mahsi, Madam Chair. Perhaps if that can be looked into because maybe there is a different system rather than using the 240-volt or the 110 fuel appliances for hot-water heating, the on-demand hot-water heating system. I don't know if that is tied to propane. It's just a contraption that hooks to a wall that provides your on-demand hot-water heating, but whether that system would work also with a wood-pellet boiler. That would probably see significant decrease in maybe the power bill amongst other things there. That is more of a comment in that area.

I am looking at page 374, your apprentices. I think, over a year ago, you said you were "gung ho" on getting apprentices into the communities. I don't see anything in my community yet. There probably aren't any new ones in other communities. I had concern with the Housing Corporation in my community not having qualified heating specialists on staff, and I think that goes against some of the boiler and gas safety aspects of it because you don't have anybody to look after these units in the community. There are big liability issues there, too, so I'm wondering if you would look at, because I believe I sent you a request, to possibly ticket the couple of maintainers who have been there for over 15 years and don't have a ticket. A journeyman housing maintainer, you're basically a jack of all trades. That's pretty much what you want under the housing umbrella. The ticket is not good once you're out of the housing umbrella. You can't start your own business. It's used within the housing umbrella, and it was probably a cost-effective way of maintaining your units, especially your heating appliances. I am wondering if we could really have a look at that and also the oil heat technician position. That is required in most of our communities. That leads to apprenticeship positions.

When I worked with housing and I saw housing in the past and says they're the best place to train people because of the number of housing stock in the communities, it's the best training ground, and we never, ever had that. I always looked at Public Works and Services, and they had one of the best programs in the Northwest Territories in training every trade: electrician, plumbers, carpenters, what-have-you. I couldn't understand at that time why housing couldn't. There could have been a lot of reasons. I am just wondering what your thoughts are on there, and if you would consider actions in this regard. Mahsi.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Member, for your comment. I hear you about the apprentices, but the reality is: I travel throughout the Northwest Territories, and I have

asked about the housing maintainer program; I have asked about apprentices. I found that it was very hard to recruit at the community level. Looking at the housing maintainer program, trying to get very creative in how we could get these apprentices ticketed is also a priority because if we don't have the apprentices, and we don't have that skill trade, our units are deteriorating because they are not being properly maintained. I do recognize we have an aging work force at the local community level. Within the department, we are looking at increasing that interest at the community level. For an example, in my riding, we are looking for an oil boiler mechanic, and they went through several casual employment people that they were wanting to invest in. The interest and educational needs at that level, it's very hard to find, to be honest. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Maybe I will just make a comment about that. Maybe we waited too long. There weren't too many OBMs out in the field. Like I say, you probably waited too long, or maybe you're too specific to an OBM. You can get a plumber gas fitter. That is an even better ticket to have. There are other ways you can do that. There are other trades, like the plumber gas fitter trade. You can get that position, and it will hopefully be enough to train and work with the Aurora College oil heat technician program to see how you can get these going. They will be a good source of information or the people who have taken the course, how many are even around the Northwest Territories? It's not good to have an attitude where you just give up. You have to really work at this and help the people of the Northwest Territories in the communities. We have to start training our people. Housing, as I say, is the best avenue for this initiative. I really ask you to reconsider and really look into this. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister, did you have any comments?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Member, for your comment. Absolutely. I want to just really reiterate that, at this level, from what I have seen so far, it is very hard to find the commitment, but it does not stop the Housing Corporation from still advocating for this position, creating employment in smaller communities, and looking at the trades and apprenticeship, as well. Looking back at this, I would bring this back to my department to really emphasize looking at the recruitments for apprenticeship for the local housing authorities and local housing organizations. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Did you have any further questions, Mr. Bonnetrouge?

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. I look forward to your findings and really encourage you to really consider this because you stated yourself we have an aging workforce. We have lots of young people coming up behind who are really looking forward to having a specific journeyman ticket, and we are not providing those opportunities. Like I say, the Housing Corporation is the best play field for this to happen. I have stated the case of Public Works and Services; I don't know if any of your employees have ever gone through those programs. You get those tickets, and you're set for life. More of a comment than anything. I have no more questions, Madam Chair. Mahsi.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Listening to comments from the Minister there, I agree with her. It's tough to find people who are qualified. It's tough to find people who are willing to go out and work. However, that doesn't mean that we stop doing that. We have to find innovative ways to ensure that residents in public housing have access to workers to fix or address any issues they have with their homes.

I just want to give you an example of what can be done, and it's a personal one. I was working at a place, and there was an issue with the furnace. Of course, everybody was telling me it was this and that, the thermostat. They always want to blame thermostat. Anyways, I looked at it, and I thought, "Geez. How am I going to fix this?" I don't really know much about furnaces. I kind of know what they look like inside and all that. I thought, "Oh, I know this guy who lives in Kelowna. He's a gas fitter. I'm going to call him." I call him, and he says, "Did you do this? Did you check the chimney? Make sure there's no snow in there." "Yeah, I did that." He says, "There's a little light on there, a red one and a yellow one." He says, "Is the red one on steady?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Well, that's good. How about the yellow?" "No, nothing." He said, "Well, it's probably the flame sensor. You got to pull out the whole guts, just clean off the thermocouple, put it back in." I did that, and it worked fine.

Maybe that's something we can do is look at having somebody who is qualified. They don't have to be in the community, but if there is somebody there who can assist that person over the phone, there are ways to do it. That's what I am hoping that your department will start looking at, is innovative ways. I don't really care what happened in the past, all the things that went wrong and that. I'm just looking into the future, and I want to see that we are doing things right.

The use of housing maintainers, there are some around Hay River that have their own businesses

just because they have that designation, and they'll do some carpentry; they'll do a little bit of plumbing and those types of things, as well. I was in one community here not long ago, and I don't think housing has anybody in there. They said, "If you happen to be talking to housing, can you ask them if they can maybe look at allowing us to change our own lightbulbs or change our own door locks, instead of having to bring somebody from Fort Simpson or from wherever it might be?"

Those are little things to us, but they are important things to people in the communities. With that, I would like to ask the Minister: what innovative ways, or any innovation, have they looked at to make things easier and streamline things by utilizing people in the community? I know that there are a lot of people in the communities, a lot of workers, who have general knowledge. We don't give them the benefit of the doubt, and we don't utilize them like we should. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know what? I'm very passionate about this portfolio, so I've partnered up with some of the communities throughout the territory with our Community Initiative Program. I have recognized that we do have skills at the community level and we do have people who are not ticketed, but you send them out there, you want them to renovate your home, it's going to be done, there we go. I've opened up that opportunity on the trips that I have made throughout the Northwest Territories. The last community I can remember just off the top of my head was Jean Marie River. They had come and approached us and they said, "We need to get our furnaces maintained. We need them to be cleaned. We have people in the community who can do it." And I said, "Let's partner up and get together, get an agreement signed so they can program-deliver on our behalf."

The other one is also the Tlicho; the same thing, as well. Instead of flying people in and out of the Tlicho communities and driving in from Yellowknife, I have initiated having them program-deliver on our behalf, too, recognizing we do have those skills at the community level, but we just don't have the tickets. I don't want the tickets to burden what we actually can partner up with at the community level. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Member.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Minister tell me, and I'm not sure, I don't really see it in this section, but the cost of contractors to go into the communities to provide services, especially in the small ones. In the larger

communities, journeymen and tradespeople are accessible, but I suspect that the cost to travel into the communities and possibly the waiting time, those are things that I would like to know. I don't expect her to answer them here. How is the department spending its money addressing those small issues that have to be dealt with in a timely manner and, with respect to time, how long does it take, say, somebody from Fort Simpson to go into Wrigley or go into Jean Marie to actually do the work? Is it within an hour, two hours, two day? If I could see some of that information, and not just for those communities, but for communities up and down the valley that may not have access to housing people in the community, or journeymen, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Member for the comment because this is quite a significant problem and issue throughout the territory, finding emergency repairs to be done immediately. Some of the communities are fly-in communities where we would have to pay for the charters to come in, the journeypeople to come in and get the work done. This is why I really emphasize the Community Initiative Program, so we can enter into those partnerships. I don't have those numbers in front of me, but it's quite significant because we don't have the tradespeople at the ground level. I just want to use an example of Nunakput. We don't have somebody in Tuktoyaktuk who is going to be available to run into the community and get the job done. We would have to go through to Inuvik. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just looking at maintenance here, where it states, "funding for LHOs to undertake demand and preventative maintenance activities to support the provision of good-quality housing." I'm just wondering how effective that is because we continually hear of units that are without water, they might be without power for a while, leaking fuel tanks, and on and on. How does the department deal with those types of issues, to make sure that we actually have good-quality housing? Because, like I said, I continually hear that we don't have good-quality housing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. This would be our housing maintainers that would be first on the site, and depending on what qualified skill that we do have at the community level, we will

use the LHOs and LHAs first before looking for additional support. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Minister tell me: which communities in the North have housing maintainers in the community, and how many or which ones do not? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm hoping that we have housing maintainers in every single one of our LHOs. I'll hand this over to Mr. Williams for his response. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Certainly, it's in our best interests to have appropriate trades personnel in our LHOs and local housing authorities. As the Minister alluded to, sometimes, recruitment is a challenge. We are stepping up in areas; we're trying to get more exposure to the trades. For example, when the Member talks about innovation, one of the innovative things that we have undertaken is in our contracting process, where we have a line item in the contracts now that the contractor has to provide training opportunities and exposure for trades. That's a starting point. We have to get interest. Every community, every region, there is a demand for tradespeople. I think we have to work with our partners in ECE. A lot of times, I hear the biggest barrier is inability to pass the trade entrance exam, so that's something we have to look at. How do we make it so that we get more people passing the trade entrance exam? I'm confident there are a lot of young people out across the territories that would love to get into a trade and be a journeyman status, a Red Seal status. Again, it's getting that exposure, so we're being innovative in that way.

I don't have the numbers on hand, but I'm pretty certain that we do have a trades housing maintainer presence in all our local housing organizations. There are some that are in the recruitment phase, for sure, like your colleague from Deh Cho mentioned. We are trying to recruit someone for Fort Providence, for example, but it is something in our best interest because the comment that MLA Bonnetrouge made is so true: we are a good training ground. The Housing Corporation could be an excellent training ground to get exposure and get people interested and excited to be a tradesperson, so we are going to continue to step this up. Right now, under our contracting initiative,

in the current fiscal year, we have I think 10 apprentices or people who have been exposed to trades on the various contracting opportunities. That's a start. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Williams. Committee, we are going to take a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we are going to continue on with housing services, with the Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. My colleague for Hay River took a lot of my questions around the maintenance program, et cetera, but maybe, I will just reiterate then, too, that I also hear a lot. I have a lot of housing units in my riding, I believe, and people who are dealing with housing issues and absentee landlord type situations or large REITs, and they tell me that they have issues in their units, there is water damage, there are issues with plumbing, things like that. A lot of times, the response is, "Oh, it's fine. It meets the code. There is no danger," and yet, they say this is a continuing, ongoing issue. My question for the Minister and her department is, and I apologize if I am reiterating Mr. Simpson's questions, but: what measurements are in place to measure how effective or efficient your maintenance program is? Are you looking at things like replacing tanks, or we're seeing fuel consumption going down? How is that metric being looked at or targeted? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to have President Tom Williams respond because we have two different scenarios, whether it be in Yellowknife, and we're looking at the apartments or whether we would be in the smaller communities and then we would look at the maintenance programming. You could just elaborate on the two differences. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair. The mechanisms that we have in place to ensure that we are providing effective maintenance, as the Minister alluded to, there are two different. We have our leased units that we have to rely heavily on the landlord to do the repairs. Our local housing organizations would work directly to report any deficiencies or any repair requirements to the landlord. It is up to them under our agreement with them, our lease with them, to repair it in a timely

matter. For our own units the LHOs are all given a budget based on historical costs. They do unit condition ratings on an annual basis, each of our units, so we know the condition of our units and what repairs are required. These repairs would be put into our capital planning process, so it's an ongoing process. We have a good indication of the age and condition of each of our units in our inventory. We know where we have to make major investments.

In the earlier questions, we're always using under the guise of making sure that these units are energy efficient in any retrofits because it's in our best interests. The majority of our budget goes to O and M costs of maintaining these units and keeping them operational. Working with our LHOs this year has been kind of an off year with COVID, but we normally have technical workshops on an annual basis with all the district offices, all the LHOs, so they are well informed. We provide training opportunities to these so they could keep abreast of any changes in their practices. We are always looking for best practices, too, so we are always looking at learning from others. We are not the only housing game in the world, so we reach out and do our jurisdictional research, what are the best practices out there and we follow those. I think it was public works used to have a northern building requirements process. We are tapped into that, and we participate fully in all events to make sure that we are up to speed on building our own capacity and capacity of our tradespeople. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair, for that fulsome response. I'm glad to hear that there is collaboration and jurisdictional scans. I also encourage chatting lots with the association of consulting engineers. I'll get a plug in for them. I think they would be a good ally, and they can do lots of free workshops for your people, as well. They often are in communities doing other work and may have an hour or two and could come in and chat with your people. I do really suggest that as a good partner group. I just wanted to come back to the department had made a comment to my colleague about putting items in the contracts around training and requirements and such. Could the department explain if there are any penalties or, I'm going to use this word again, sanctions for not meeting these targets or these promises in the contracts? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Mr. Tom Williams respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. President Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have it written into the contract that training opportunities or trade exposure is made available in the contract for every project. As I mentioned, we have over 10 individuals that are participating in that that have been getting exposed to the trades. In regard to penalties, we haven't run into that yet. I think we've been very fortunate that contractors see the benefits of hiring a northern workforce, as well. It helps reduce their overhead costs, having a northern workforce. To date, we haven't received anything back from the contractors. They are helping us move forward with the success of this project. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do appreciate that. You have such a great opportunity within this department to create learning opportunities. I think, again, I'm sort of probably reiterating what people have said, but I often, in my quest for women in STEM, have talked about "you can't be what you can't see." That is a famous quote from Sally Ride. If you're not bringing in children or kids and youth into some of these builds, you always have to keep the kids out of the construction site as it is anyway, so why not bring them in at that point and show them what the different trades are with the focus on women? More of a comment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I'll take it as a comment. Are there any further questions under this section? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I get an updated figure of how many units we rent off of private landlords? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll get vice president, Mr. Jim Martin, to respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Housing Corporation leases approximately 200 units. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I recognize that many of those units go to large southern landlords, especially here in Yellowknife renting those 200 units. Has the Housing Corporation done an assessment of whether it is actually cheaper to actually own units as opposed to rent them off of the market rent here in Yellowknife? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Mr. Jim Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Housing Corporation has looked at this in the past. I think back in 2017, we did a couple of analyses in this area, and it was found at that time that it was actually cheaper to own versus lease. This recognized the fact that the landlords would have been factoring in profit components and reflecting the cost of the construction. To construct, for the Housing Corporation at that time, it was actually cheaper than leasing. There are a number of factors that had to be considered in this. As costs do change over time, it is important to have more frequent assessments, and we are doing that. In fact, in one of our earlier responses to standing committee, we did commit to provide some updated analyses in that regard. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. One of my other concerns here is that we give about \$20 million to our local housing authorities and housing organizations, and I've heard repeatedly from different ones that they would also like to be able to write grants and get money out of the federal government, especially in cases where they could probably get capital to build units and save money as the Housing Corporation just said. Why do we not let our housing authorities get money out of the federal government? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have President Williams respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. President Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Our local housing organizations or associations are an arm of the Housing Corporation, an administrative arm. They have a community housing agreement that they sign, they all sign on it. Looking at why

they can't access federal programming is that they are not the owners of the assets. The Housing Corporation is the bona fide owner of all the assets, so in order to apply for, say, co-investment programming, you have to own the asset. You have to have ownership, so that's the primary reason. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I've mentioned this previously, I think it has caused tension in the past that some of the local housing organizations view themselves as a lot more arm's length than perhaps the Housing Corporation views them, and I know there's debate about whether they're an agent. When you talk to a lot of the members on the boards, they want to be going and stop renting from Northview, and they want to be going and writing these applications and getting the funding. I think it's a different situation in Yellowknife, where we are paying private landlords right now, and there is capital funding that exists from the federal government. Is it possible to have that conversation with the Yellowknife Housing Authority about the possibility of them taking on a little bit more of a role and having a little more independence here? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we can have those conversations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I would really like us to stop renting those 200 units and build some more public housing units. Then, we will have added to the stock permanently, and we're not at the whim of southern landlords. I hope, one day, we can replace those 200 units that we rent, and it will save us money, as the department has concluded previously. My next question, Madam Chair, is the \$1.8 million we pay in property taxes and land leases. How much of that does the Housing Corporation pay to the GNWT?

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Madam Chair, for that detail, I'll have Vice-President Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The vast majority of that amount would be going to the GNWT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. One of my frustrations with government is how much time we spend paying ourselves. I bet you there are about 50 government positions that do nothing else than move money around, and I see, every year, we pay MACA and Lands \$1.8 million. We require them to assess all of the Housing Corporation buildings; we require them to review lease conditions. That's a lot of work, and it's a lot of money that the Housing Corporation then just puts to the GNWT. Has the Housing Corporation had a conversation, or is it possible for us to stop paying ourselves this \$1.8 million?

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. That would be a conversation I would have to have with my colleagues in the Departments of Lands and Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know the Minister, both as MACA and in her previous life, is well aware of a lot of the burdens of dealing with the assessments, and that it's not necessarily an easy task to pay ourselves. It can actually become quite complicated. Similarly, in this vein, in 2014 the Housing Corporation signed an agreement with the GNWT to obtain all of their leases in fee simple. I asked the Minister of Lands about that today, and we have made very little progress on this. The agreement is actually to do it for \$1, which then would reduce some of the lease fees that we have to pay to ourselves. Can I just get an update on what, from the Housing Corporation's perspective, is holding this work back? Why can't we obtain our units in fee simple? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to reiterate what my colleague for the Department of Lands said, it's consultations within the specific regions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know the Housing Corporation is in frequent

conversations to transfer units to Indigenous governments, and I think there is some tension there because they don't want to take on those units without the maintenance funding that comes with them. Have we transferred any of our Housing Corporation leases in fee simple to Indigenous governments? Is this part of the plan of getting them in fee simple? I understand that consultation with Indigenous governments to get land can be difficult. If part of the goal is to then give it to the Indigenous governments, it seems that consultation is much easier. Have we ever transferred Housing Corporation unit leases to Indigenous governments? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we have. I'm not specific on the region or the area. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to clarify, if we transfer it to an Indigenous government, do we do that in fee simple or are we just transferring the lease? Is fee simple a requirement to then give housing to Indigenous governments? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would have to have a conversation with my colleague for the Department of Lands for lands transactions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to get one more follow-up. I know we did the 2017 assessment, and we concluded that it's cheaper to build housing and own it than it is to rent off these southern landlords. I also think that the GNWT has done this analysis, and it's much cheaper for almost all of these line items. It's cheaper for electrical power, if we build according to new GNWT standards. It's cheaper for the \$6 million we pay in heating fuel here. It's not just purely the calculation of whether the rent is cheaper than the overall operations. It's cheaper in almost every analysis that we could possibly do. I don't really want to see another analysis on this from the Housing Corporation. This work has been done before. We know, if we build according to good building standards, we save money. Does the department have a plan to build housing to replace the 200 units that we rent off our southern landlords? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Vice-President Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. As mentioned, the Housing Corporation certainly recognizes that it's important to continue to invest in new buildings, new energy-efficient buildings, and in doing so, that does enable the Housing Corporation to reduce our lease requirements for existing housing stock, so that's certainly something that we continue to look at, and those opportunities. We're fortunate that we do have programs such as the co-investment fund where we have private developers that are also looking at opportunities to invest, and the Housing Corporation as well as those private developers is also looking at opportunities to access additional federal funding to build additional units, as well. We will certainly continue to move in that direction, also. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under community housing services? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I think this is the part where the community housing plans fall under. Is that correct? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I think so, yes. Go ahead.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I see that there are 33 communities, of course. I think there has been one completed for Whati. Do we actually have a schedule for the rest of the communities, at this point? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we do. We have 20 engagements so far. I don't have the schedule in front of me right now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Can the Minister provide that to standing committee? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I see that, in the Minister's opening remarks, she mentioned that there is going to be a person hired, I think, to help with this work. I'm just wondering how that's going to speed this up. Sorry. She mentioned that there is funding to support the hiring of a new term community housing planner to assist with delivery of the community housing plans. How is that position going to move this along? Because I think I've asked this about five years in a row, now. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have President Williams respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, President Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we're in the process of recruiting a second community planner. It's certainly going to help us accelerate the planning process. Right now, we have over 20 plans in various stages of activity. As the Member mentioned, Whati was the first plan completed last year. We're on the verge of completing five more plans across the territories, and we're starting to get a lot of interest. As we travel out to the communities, there is a lot of interest for communities to develop plans. The City of Yellowknife has approached us, the Town of Inuvik, the Town of Hay River, so there is a lot of interest out there. Small communities, we signed a participation agreement with Nahanni Butte, so even the smaller communities are coming to the plate, as well. They see the benefits of the community housing plans. When they hear it's going to help inform future infrastructure decisions, I think that is a take on its own.

I have to highlight Whati because the reason why that was the first one chosen is because the road is under construction. It's going to open up. The mine is going to open up. It's going to be an influx of people moving into Whati, so getting that plan in place and having it implemented -- they are actually already implementing it. One module unit through our community housing support program was brought on the winter road last year, and the second module unit will be brought in when the new road opens. Communities are excited. They are excited to get new infrastructure in their communities, and having these plans in place is going to allow that to happen. It's going to be a living document that the community owns. It's not the old way of government telling you what you get in your communities. Those days are gone. It's the community telling us what their needs are and what their wishes are, so we are changing the model. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I detect some excitement on the part of the president, and I am right there with you. I think the other thing, though, that these community housing plans are going to do is help refine our ask in Ottawa. We have to have that information, and we need that to compile it, to put it together, so that we have a better case to make with Ottawa, to get money out of them. Yes, we want to support communities identifying their needs, and they have to do that, hopefully, in financial terms, as well. That is what needs to be taken to Ottawa. What are the plans to wrap up the work in a more consolidated fashion to make a better case to take to Ottawa? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have President Tom Williams respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. President Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Madam Chair, the Member raises a good point because, like I said, it does inform future infrastructure decisions, and those are decisions made by this government and decisions made by the federal government. Certainly, putting that business case forward is critical. We have a good start on it. Having the second planner in place is really going to help expedite the process. It is a lot of work to put these plans together because there is a lot of community engagement that takes place. I think, What, there were four separate meetings in the community and then meetings outside after, to wrap it up. It takes some time, and we have to go at the pace of the community, as well. What our goal is in the life of this Assembly is to get them all completed. If we could get them done earlier, which is my hope and I think the hope of everybody is to get them done earlier because we need these, this information, to fight our battles with the federal government to access more housing dollars, so it's very critical that we move forward. I am keeping my fingers crossed that we get this person recruited and we have two people doing the plans instead of like right now where we just have one person administering them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yes. Thanks, Madam Chair. I don't think I could say it any better myself. We have to have that work done so we can make the case with

Ottawa. Are we trying to get these plans done in the next year or two, or what is the end date to get all 33 done? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am very optimistic. I want to have these plans done by the end of the lifetime of this government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, the sooner the better. I want to turn now to: the Housing Corporation, as a result of a motion brought forward by the Member for Yellowknife Centre in the last Assembly, developed a report called Towards Level Ground, and this was a very good report that sort of laid the foundation for what it would cost to get our housing out of core need back in September of 2017. Are there any plans to update this work? Because that is the other piece that needs to be taken to Ottawa, in my humble opinion. It's now four years old. Is that going to get updated? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have President Tom Williams respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. President Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is correct. Updating the Towards Level Ground on core need across the NWT is critical to present our case to Ottawa and showing our needs that we have in each of our 33 communities, so we will be looking at updating that report. There has been a lot of investment since that report was created, and I have to say that all of our investments that we make in housing are reducing core need across the territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Madam Chair, yes, so I just want to be really clear. Is there funding in the budget to get this done this year? This should have been done last year, but is there money to get this updated as soon as possible because this is what you need to take to Ottawa again? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have President Tom Williams respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, there is money in our budget, in our contracting budget, that would accommodate revising this, updating the Towards Level Ground report. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. I appreciate that. I just cannot stress enough the need to get this work done to make the case to Ottawa. I just don't know what else I can say. I will beg, I will scrape, I will do anything to get you guys better prepared to take a case to Ottawa to get more money for housing for us. It needs to be a priority when you go to Ottawa. I don't know what else I can say. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Seeing that there is nobody else to talk to on this section, there are no further questions. Move on to the executive, beginning on page 375 with information items on page 381. Questions? Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. No. This is in regard to homelessness initiatives and emergency shelters in the communities. Are we able to give us housing numbers, like the house number and what is available in the communities? Are they furnished like they are supposed to be this past year, in the communities? Are there four units available in my four communities? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I have the Member just clarify? The four units that were to be furnished, is he referencing for COVID? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JACOBSON: [Microphone turned off] ...for emergency shelters, but COVID took or was supposed to be taking them over for if they had a COVID case in the community, so I am just wondering if those emergency units have been taken back, and are they available for, say, Paulatuk? I have a person who has been homeless now for two years, so I am waiting to see if he is able to get into that emergency shelter. Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have President Tom Williams update the Member. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. President Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member raises a point that we hear all the time. The homelessness has really reared its head under COVID. There is certainly a big demand, big need, in all our communities. Right now, the problem that we have to deal with is we have a shortage of housing. I know that, having emergency shelters, sometimes, it could be seen as -- if you have a surplus and have a whole bunch of houses, it would be great to have one in every community, but there are cases where we have huge wait lists in every community. We have to utilize our housing stock as best as we can to house people.

There are other opportunities that communities could apply for funding to look at other avenues to create emergency shelter in their community, and we'd be willing to work with the Member on identifying which communities have those needs. He mentioned Paulatuk. We're willing to reach out to the Hamlet of Paulatuk and work with them on identifying if there's a unit that we have, an older unit that's not in stock, and maybe it's something we can repair and have it repurposed for a shelter. A further update is: the unit in Paulatuk, we have one unit there, and it's currently under repair. It should be completed by the end of the month. I think we could revisit it. We will have a unit, and we can work with the community on that aspect. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you. That's good to hear. I guess we're going down that road where I will be asking for that unit for the hamlet of Paulatuk so we have a shelter. He makes a makeshift house out of plywood and staying at the end of town. It's not right. I'm willing to work with the department and work with the Minister to make this work for the community of Paulatuk, and we'll go from there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. I'll take that as a comment. Any other questions under executive? Seeing none, we will move on to finance and infrastructure services beginning on page 378 with information items on 379. Questions? Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: I'm looking at page 378 where you have infrastructure planning division. I

note that you mentioned you've got a 54-apartment complex coming up in Yellowknife that's going to be tied to a wood-pellet boiler system. Has the corporation considered pilot projects out of the capital city, out into small communities to try a biomass heating system, and monitoring for cost savings and whatnot? It could be a pilot project even in Fort Providence where you can go in there and build five houses and tie it to a wood-pellet boiler, or else set up a wood-pellet boiler and tie, could be five to 10 houses. I think in my community, five houses are what's standard for being in a cluster. You could even look at trying it up in Tuktoyaktuk or Paulatuk, somewhere where it's out-of-the-way to just try the systems out there and even ship the wood pellets up there, the whole system, to see if there're any real challenges to doing that kind of stuff moving forward. I just wonder what the Minister's thoughts are on something like that? Mahsi?

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Vice-President Jim Martin respond. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. As mentioned previously, the Housing Corporation has invested in a number of biomass systems in the past, and they've been very successful projects. We do want to continue with those type of investments for sure. We are currently conducting a couple of feasibility studies right now, looking in Inuvik as well as Fort Simpson for possible district energy systems. We could certainly continue to look in other communities, as well, for possible future investments as we continue to work closely with the federal government for additional federal funding opportunities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. No further questions? Okay. Any other questions under finance and infrastructure services? Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just looking at the line item again for infrastructure planning and maintenance services at almost \$2.6 million on 379. I'm just curious to know if there're any efficiencies that the department sees could be made by, perhaps, sharing, and maybe it's not this particular area, but sharing some of the work with the Department of Infrastructure around their tendering of projects, et cetera, and whether or not we're somewhat duplicating that, and could there potentially be looked at restructuring a bit so that

the Department of Infrastructure could take on a bit of that work? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Vice-President Jim Martin to respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Housing Corporation does have a very close working relationship with the Department of Infrastructure, and we do certainly work closely with them. In terms of larger projects, the commercial-like projects, when you get into the 17-plexes and larger buildings of that nature, there's a number of codes that do need to be considered, and Infrastructure does have that specialty and expertise in dealing with the larger, commercial-like buildings. We do continue to collaborate with them closely on these larger builds, and the Housing Corporation's main focus has certainly been in the smaller builds. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: No, I'm good. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Are there any further questions? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm going to offer the Minister a little bit of free advice. This district heating system that the Housing Corporation is putting in, I think part of it is actually in my riding over on Woolgar. Why don't you guys offer a tour for the MLAs when it's finished? This is a really good news story. Can the Minister offer a tour for the MLAs and media to promote some of the good work that you guys are actually doing? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Always trying to make the Ministers look good. Look, I have a wood-pellet boiler in our house. We've had it for five years. It raises a couple of issues for me. Our insurance company cancelled our insurance over the holidays on us because we have a wood-pellet boiler, even though we've been with the same

company for five years. We had some renovations done on the roof, and all of a sudden, they started to ask questions about our heating system. Then they cancelled the policy on us. One of the issues is trying to get home insurance is a barrier, period. I've raised this on the floor before. Is the Housing Corporation doing anything on the issue of home insurance and how that district heating systems or biomass might influence the ability for homeowners, even maybe renters or whatever, or you guys to even get insurance coverage? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have President Tom Williams respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you Madam Chair. Home insurance, it can be cost prohibitive at time. We recognize that. Again, all you have to do is suffer one loss, and you understand why you have insurance. As a government, we're self-insured, so it really doesn't impact us with our assets. Certainly, in our home ownership programs, certainly, we have to look at it. We are working closely with the Department of Finance, trying to find solutions. I've said, as someone who's suffered a loss in my own home, I was sure glad I had insurance because I certainly didn't have \$100,000 to do the repair. All you need is one loss. I think it's more educating people on the merits of insurance and educating the insurance companies, the providers, that they are losing out on a huge market if they don't adjust their policies for our realities here in the North. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay. Thanks, Madam Chair. I just wanted to make sure that is on somebody's radar. While I am at it, of course, I am going to call out my insurance company, Aviva: thank you very much for cancelling our policy over the holidays. Look, wood pellets are good, but what is even more important I think in the more remote communities is wood chips, the ability to do wood chips, because you don't have to pelletize them. You can go down and harvest willows beside the river, and you can turn them into wood chips and burn them. I think Fort McPherson had done some work on this. What is the Housing Corporation doing in terms of looking at wood chips as a potential biomass source? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have President Tom Williams respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Madam Chair, certainly, looking at alternative energy, it's important for us. O and M is the biggest part of our budget, so looking at reducing O and M through biomass or through other energy efficiencies is huge for us as a corporation. We work with our communities. We have a program out there that is suited. It's a very flexible program. It's called the community housing support initiative program, and if communities have a desire to go down that path, like the Hamlet of Aklavik did, they got into a biomass project last year. They asked the Housing Corporation to buy into the project, to use that service, the biomass product, to heat one of our six-plexes in Aklavik. It's a good arrangement. It's helping make their project viable, but at the same time, we are using an alternative heating source for that infrastructure. We are always open to it. We always encourage communities. Our program is very flexible. If they have an idea, let's talk about it. We are open to these discussions because reducing energy consumption and cost is a big thing for the corporation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I appreciate that. Is there any specific work that the Housing Corporation has done or is interested in doing with wood chips as opposed to wood pellets? Wood chips, I think that is the way we have to go here. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. As far as I know, we are just working with the wood pellets, and the wood chips would be something that we would have to have a further discussion about. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I want to encourage the Housing Corporation to be a little bit more proactive on this front and not just sit back and wait for somebody to come to you. If you have a new four-plex you are setting up in a community that does have potential access to wood chips, look at it as a potential. Do it as a pilot project. I am sure you could partner with Aurora Research Institute

and Arctic Energy Alliance. I think there would be money out there to do that kind of stuff, so I want to encourage you guys to be a little bit more innovative and look at doing a pilot project with wood chips. Thanks. That is all I have got. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Thank you, Member. Minister, did you have any last comments?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: No comments. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I think we are going to take a break here, and then we will resume and finish up this department and then have the last item. Thanks.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I call committee back to order. Committee, we are continuing on with finance and infrastructure services, and I have Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm hoping committee can indulge me for a bit in that I want to speak a bit about the infrastructure investment for the Housing Corporation. I note we get their capital budget in the fall, but it's kind of an information item. This is where their capital budget is now set. Can I just have a bit of an explanation? This year, we spent \$47 million on capital, or the Housing Corporation did, but they are budgeting \$10 million. Can I have a bit of an explanation for that decrease in infrastructure investment? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Vice-President Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. Our investment in capital compared to 2020-2021 did decline. Within our fiscal framework, we have to accommodate both our capital investment plans as well as our operational plans, and we did invest additional dollars and set aside additional dollars for the co-investment investments for Arnica Inn as well as for the Hay River Family Support Centre. Those additional investments resulted in a reduction in our available capital dollars for 2021-2022. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: I don't know exactly how to answer this, but one of the problems I struggle with

is that we pass the Housing Corporation operations budget. Then they go away and decide what their capital budget is, and \$10 million, I think everyone would agree, including the Housing Corporation, is not enough. I recognize that what happens is then we try to find extra money, but can I get a sense of, once we pass this budget here, what the Housing Corporation is actually going to spend on capital? I believe, every year, we actually end up finding more money somehow, but I want to know what that number is projected to be by passing this budget. Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Vice-President Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. This budget reflects a contribution from the GNWT of approximately \$76 million. That's about 70 percent of our revenues for the year, and those funds are utilized, as I mentioned, to cover both our operations and maintenance O and M requirements, which we are reviewing today, and the capital estimates amount of \$10.625 million, which was reviewed previously. In terms of the outlook for next year, the Housing Corporation will be delivering the \$10.625 million of planned capital investments, as well as any carry-over projects that we will not be able to finalize this year. That would include a number of the projects associated with the RCMP housing delivery. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. I just wish that we would have more capital and build more buildings. Can I get a bit of an update on the Arnica and whether the Housing Corporation expects to spend that money that is allotted for the co-investment fund, and whether they expect the CMHC to actually come through and finish that deal? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Vice-President Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. As mentioned, we do have our cost-share dollars set aside for the Arnica Inn project. That project is still

under review with the federal government, under their co-investment fund program. We do continue to meet regularly with the federal government to review the status of all of these applications, and we hope to hear very soon that this project will be proceeding. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm also very hopeful that it will proceed. When I look at the infrastructure services, I just wish we were spending more on capital, and I don't know how to phrase that any more. Another one of these problems is that, in Yellowknife, the YWCA used to have Rockhill Apartments, and that burnt down. They still since get funded from the Housing Corporation, but they, once again, then go out and rent from southern landlords, as opposed to when they used to have a building. They could actually offer much better wraparound services, for cheaper, to more people. Since we lost the Rockhill Apartments, has the Housing Corporation done anything to secure that program another building? Because it's kind of with a few different landlords right now, all over the place, despite us continuing to fund that money to the YWCA. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have President Williams respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Certainly, losing Rockhill Apartments was a big loss to the community. It served the vulnerable population that it did and families. Right now, we are working with the YWCA on a co-investment application, so they are looking at proceeding in that manner to acquire new units. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll follow up with the Minister to get some details on that. I'm very happy to hear that. I believe, right now, the Department of health is renting the Aspen Apartments, which is a federal building, but there has been some talk about that perhaps becoming social housing. Can I just get an update on that? I'm not sure if that's a health question or a Housing Corporation question, but if there is any future for the Aspen Apartments in Yellowknife?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Housing Corporation has acquired the asset, but we do not provide the programming. I will have Vice-President Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Early on, when the pandemic started, we worked very closely with the federal government to enter into a lease arrangement for that building, and we continue to have a very good working relationship with the federal government in this regard. They are now working with Treasury Board Canada to secure a further extension of those lease arrangements for the GNWT and the Housing Corporation, and we are working towards a next extension until September 30th. Beyond that, we have not had any further conversations beyond that point. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. When you look in Yellowknife at all the rental units, there was a lot of work by the Women's Society to get hold of the Arnica. The YWCA is trying really hard to get hold of a building. It's just hard to get hold of a building. Part of the ultimate solution here is to build more buildings, obviously, and more housing, but can we have a conversation, or is it feasible to not just extend the lease to September for the Aspen but actually approach the Treasury Board about taking that building into Housing Corporation or GNWT ownership? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Vice-President Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. In the discussions we had been having the federal government regarding the Aspen Apartments, they have indicated to us that they are in close discussions with the Department of National Defence, and the DND employees may also have a requirement for that facility. That is currently being reviewed by the federal government, and they would have to assess their needs first, I understand, in accordance with their procurement policies before considering a transfer to Indigenous governments or the GNWT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Maybe we can convince the DND to build a new building, and then we can get a hold of that one. I am sad to hear that. I'm looking at page 380 and the emergency shelters, the \$2.6 million. When I look at the Health and Social Services and Housing Corporation budgets, my understanding is that, over the years, Health and Social Services has gotten much more into the shelter operations. The general line is that the Housing Corporation funds night shelters, and Health and Social Services funds day shelters. I think, at this point, the health budget has actually exceeded the Housing Corporation for shelter money. Can I just have a bit of an explanation of whether that line is still the case? Who should I talk to about shelter funding, the Housing Corporation or Health and Social Services? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Vice-President Jim Martin respond.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Back in 2018, the Housing Corporation worked, actually, with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and brought forward a joint submission to transfer funding for overnight shelters to the Housing Corporation. There were five shelters included in that transfer. That's what that line item represents, that \$2.6 million. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. Just a quick comment. This homelessness issue affects all of us from all over the North. We see it downtown here. It makes me sad. I went down to get one of my suits altered, and I saw right downstairs in the middle of the day, an unfortunate individual with nowhere to go who was startled. They shot up and looked at me. I'm like, "Oh, I didn't mean to scare you." It just made me really think: how are we doing as people in the North, to look after our most vulnerable? It really just tears my heartstrings to see that. In terms of a line item here, I will start off with the transitional rent supplement program. This line item here appears to be sunsetted. Can the Minister just explain that line item on page 380?

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have a change in programming that we are engaging with the federal government. I will have

Vice-President Jim Martin respond. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. As the Minister mentioned, this program is an NWT Housing Corporation-administered program. It is set to sunset effective April 1, 2021. By that time, we continue to work very closely with the federal government to plan for the implementation of a new program, the Canada Housing Benefit, which is a light program, but it's a federally administered program, and it will replace the target client group that we have there to support them through that means. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just so I get this right, is there going to be a gap in funding here between the sunset of this and when the federal money kicks in? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, there won't be. Thank you.

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

MR. NORN: That's good. I had some questions about the homelessness review. This will fall under homelessness initiatives. Can the Minister just give us an update on where this is sitting? I think the last we were told is there would be some sort of update in the spring of this year. Thank you.

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

MR. NORN: My apologies. For the GNWT homelessness review. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have President Tom Williams respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair. In terms of the homelessness review, we are working on finalizing the document. Our plan is to table it in the House here and do a presentation to committee. When we talk about, as MLA Johnson mentioned, having pots of money in different

departments that deal with homelessness, part of this homeless strategy is to have everything under one roof. It will be easier for clientele that need the supports. They don't have to be going to different departments to get that support. That's our plan. We would be prepared to present to committee at committee's call. The document will be finalized shortly, and it will be ready for tabling. I think we are looking at towards the end of this session.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I look forward to seeing this, and hopefully, we will get something fruitful out of this. The way I look at it, too, is there are so many overlaps when we do our work with other departments. Any time you streamline something and simplify it, it just makes it easier for the public to access. This is a good thing, I think. Like one of my colleagues said, it looks good on paper, but I think it's the action we want to see and to see that actually get to where it needs to. We shouldn't see the numbers of homelessness that we are, and I am hoping that we could attack this head-on. Again, I think simplifying our process is a good way to go. I don't have any other questions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to the homeless review, how many homeless clients were talked to or interviewed during this process? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have to get back to the Member with further detail. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I see that is one of the problems. We develop strategies, but we never want to talk to the actual clients, the people who require the service. We went through that in Hay River where we had probably about seven or eight groups in a round table, and everybody was passing everything off. I asked them. I said, "Who talked to the guys on the street?" Nobody. What do they want? Well, that's what we have to find out. Right? It's important to do that. Not all of them want a one-stop shop. Some of them just want certain pieces of it. If you think that you are going to save everybody, that's just not realistic. I think you have to listen to what they want; otherwise, we are never going to achieve what is required.

The number of organizations that get involved in this is a problem, as well, because like I said, everybody passes the buck, and it comes down to: who is going to pay for it? Who is going to carry the liability? Who is going to monitor it? There're no spaces. We can't have it downtown. I have heard all that. I talked to both sides. The guy is coming to my office at 7:00 in the morning for coffee, and I'd BS with him there. Some of them are turning their lives around. They need encouragement, as well. They encourage me, as well, you know, to do better.

I think that, if this government is going to look at strategies, whether it is homeless or anything else, make sure if you do nothing at least talk to the clients. It's kind of like the RCMP houses. I suspect that nobody actually talked to the members what they require. That is our fault with the RCMP houses, the federal government's fault, as well. You'll learn so much, and it would save so much time. We would probably get things right if we do that. It's probably more of a comment than anything. The Minister can comment on that if she wishes while I get a chance to look at some of the numbers. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister, did you have any comments?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Basically, just that within the Housing Corporation we do have a homelessness position there that oversees throughout the territory, but we have a lot of engagements that the department has flown into communities throughout the territory to look at those acquired services that are needed. They have met with clients face to face. We did have an on the ground homelessness, I want to say manager, I'm not too sure of the title, but just for an example we had a homelessness person come here to see myself at the Legislative Assembly and the Housing Corporation was quite connected to provide adequate services for the individual and making sure that they did have accommodations for that night. We do associate with the clients face to face. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would ask: when did they visit Hay River and talk to some of the clientele? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Mr. Tom Williams respond. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, President Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair. In regard with Hay River, we did have an engagement there when we set up the homeless shelter there this fall. We did reach out, we met with the community, I think it was the Hay River council of disabilities that we worked with. They were the NGO that was sponsoring the homeless shelter. We did reach out to them, to their staff. We did reach out the clientele, and we have the facilities up and running right now. We hope it is a long-term engagement in Hay River because there is a need there. Right now, it's funded internally, but we will be going for forced growth. We have two shelters that we have to increase our numbers by. We also added one in Fort Simpson. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I expect that if you went and engaged with the clientele and the disabilities council, can you tell me how many clients they were serving at that shelter? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Fifteen. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. My understanding is that contract is up at the end of March. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll forward the response to Vice-President Martin for further details. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. With regard to the Hay River homeless shelter, I believe that's what we are referring to here, the expectation is that the Housing Corporation will continue to work with the operator and will extend those services into 2021-2022. As our president mentioned, we would be seeking support through the 2022-2023 business planning process for ongoing funding. That would be our objective. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. What would the cost be per person per month? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Those numbers fluctuate, I'm not sure what they are at right now. I'll have Mr. Jim Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Under the current funding formula for the shelters the Housing Corporation is funding about \$52 per bed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The funding that is going to the disabilities council, what is the amount? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Mr. Jim Martin respond. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't think we have the specific lease amount details here to share at this time, but we can certainly provide that. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Because you said, I think it was \$50 it must have been a night for a bed? When I did the calculations based on what I know about who is using it, it probably works out, if you include the day shelter, the night shelter, the cost of RCMP time, the cost of the ambulance, you're probably looking at anywhere \$8,000 to \$10,000 a month per person. When I see that number and then I hear discussion about buying buildings in Yellowknife to accommodate homeless people, we've got a perfect homeless shelter in Hay River, it's called the Mackenzie Place high rise. We may not have to use all of it, but it would be an opportunity to do something. I'll continue asking questions in the House on that building and how the Housing Corporation may be able to participate in utilizing it to reduce their cost per person, where you can probably pay \$1,500 to \$2,000 a month for an apartment for one of the clients versus paying the

cost between the community and this government \$8,000 to \$10,000 a month. If the Minister wants to comment, that's fine. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll take that as a comment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Anything further? All right, if there are no further questions we will move on to programs and district operations, beginning on page 382. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: I'd like to switch the witnesses. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please switch the witnesses? Minister, would you please introduce your witness for the record?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Programs and operations vice-president, Mr. Franklin Carpenter. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Welcome. We will now begin with programs and district operations on page 382 with information items following that. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm looking at page 384 and the lease to own program. To start, can the Minister explain: is this a new program and that's why we don't see any in the 2019-2020 actuals, or for some reason it wasn't spent in that year? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Vice-President Franklin Carpenter respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The lease-to-own program is two parts, really. It's an enhancement of a previous program to enable our public-housing tenants make the transition to home ownership, and the second part is we are still planning to get back into constructing new homes. That is a part that is not quite there yet as we have not been able to build new homes yet, but it's a two-part process. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just not sure if that means that it was in place before. I note that there is a focus and a mandate

priority and a commitment to get people into home ownership as a means of alleviating some of the pressures on our housing. I am just curious that I am hearing concerns from community members and residents that the stock that is being proposed to be off-loaded, for lack of a better word, or sold to them, is maybe not perhaps of the standards that it should be. There are concerns over the repair of the homes, et cetera. Can the Minister explain what the department is doing to ensure that liabilities are not being passed on to people who we are getting into home ownership? Are there things like phase 1 or 2 environmental site assessments being done or hazardous-materials studies? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Vice-President Franklin Carpenter respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. As the Member pointed out, the onus is on us to make sure that we are not seen as off-loading a bad product, so we will do our due diligence to ensure that all of the health and safety aspects of the unit are taken care of. Also, the energy efficiency items should be there to make sure that the operating costs are as low as possible. In some cases, a home might cost \$10,000 to do those repairs. In others, it's in around the \$50,000 range, but as I said, the diligence is on us to do that. In terms of the hazardous-materials assessment, our obligation is to advise the buyer of what we believe are maybe hazardous materials in those units prior to selling them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate hearing the language that the onus is on the department or the organization to ensure that they are not selling a bad product. However, I believe that in the law it is actually a "buyer beware" scenario, and it often is up to the purchaser to ensure that the right things have been put in place et cetera. My next question is: what is the Minister and her department doing to ensure that plain-language communications are happening around environmental liability, housing liability, et cetera, to ensure that the clients know what they are getting into? That could be further to the programs that the -- I forget your title, Mr. Carpenter -- that Mr. Carpenter said about ensuring people understand. What are they doing to ensure people are prepared

to repair their homes and that they understand that type of responsibility? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Vice-President Franklin Carpenter respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Part of our transition process for people becoming homeowners is that we provide training to them. We just completed an update of our home maintenance training program, and our focus on it was two parts: first of all, to keep it plain language so people could understand all of the ins and outs of being a homeowner and looking after your home, and the second part is all the safety aspects of the home, as well. We will go through all of the training and walk through. We usually do the training at the home, and it's updated, and we believe it's a very good product. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. As somebody who is not probably very handy myself, I think that sounds great and welcome an opportunity to take that course myself. Speaking of which, into retrofits and repairs which segues nicely, we do have a mandate to have more seniors age in place. I look at some of the numbers around that, particularly the line item on page 384, there is about a \$400,000 drop for the seniors aging in place program. Could the Minister explain what that drop is? It's my understanding that this would be a very well-subscribed program. Is there a want to increase funding here, given that we want more people to stay in place, especially now, after COVID? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Vice-President Franklin Carpenter respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have the exact specifics of why there would be a reduction, but I can assure the Members that, if we are fully subscribed up to that number, we will move funds around with our Home-Ownership Program to accommodate those extra applicants that we would get.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Great. Thank you. I am glad to hear that it's not a cap and there would not be other funding available should we need it. Again, I look at the Habitat for Humanity line item, and I am glad to see that we are supporting such a great organization. To me, it has been great. I live just down the road from one of their builds here in Yellowknife. I would support and maybe would like to ask why there is not more money there, considering. I get that it's probably just a contribution to the organization itself. However, they are tangibly producing homes for people to live in, and so can the Minister just explain why there is not an increase in that number? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We continue to work with Habitat for Humanity, and there is a relationship that has been built there. I will have Mr. Franklin Carpenter respond. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister pointed out, we try to encourage and participate in the Habitat for Humanity projects. What we have been pushing them over the past few years, though, is to go outside of Yellowknife. The last one they did here was in Yellowknife. They do have some trouble getting partners in the outlying communities, but we did put a notional amount there in anticipation that we would get greater uptake. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am again really glad to hear the focus being outside of Yellowknife. I don't want everything to come here to the capital, and I recognize that the home ownership issues are probably much greater in the communities, in the smaller communities. I had the opportunity when I was travelling to go and see the assisted living or the four-plex for the single people in Aklavik with the Minister. I thought that seemed like a great program. I have heard lots about the fact that there is not a lot for individual people to get into units. Can the Minister speak to if there are going to be more of those types of projects? If so, are they under here, or am I in the wrong section? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. That would be referencing the northern pathways program. I will have Vice-President Franklin Carpenter respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't think we have any planned for this year, but that program is absolutely on the top of our priority list. There has been some discussion today about homelessness, particularly in small communities where there are no facilities. This is a very successful program in that it's a small four-plex. Usually, the homeless are single people. We would try to find a local group to run the operation and do the programming there. I think it's going to be our best program in addressing the homelessness situation, essentially in rural or remote communities. As I said, it's our top priority to find funding to keep that, to expand that program into as many places as do not have any shelters or a homeless shelter, big shelters or small ones in their community. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. You would have a Member here who would be very supportive in voting for funding for more of those types of programs. Just a last comment: I am really interested, myself, in looking at communal styles of living, places in Europe where they do create a different model of housing, where they have a central area, communal area, communal kitchens and then smaller units off where people can live. This strikes me as something that would be very worthwhile for our northern communities that live in this type of communal style already. Just more of a comment that, if we are going to do jurisdictional scans, that we also look outside of Canada and look to countries that are being innovative and showing new paths forward. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. I will take that as a comment. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank, Madam Chair. I am happy to see the \$6.6-million increase for the housing support initiative/co-investment fund on page 384. I think a lot of work has been done, and I am thankful to the department for that. Can I just get confirmation that we did hire a person to help navigate the co-investment fund? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we did hire a person for the co-investment

fund. I think she started in December? January? December. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Do we have an update on how many applications are currently in the co-investment fund, whether it's in the larger one or the carve-off from the Northwest Territories? I'm just trying to get a sense of how much potential money we can get out of the federal government here. Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have President Tom Williams provide those numbers. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you Madam Chair. Certainly, the investment that was made to assist proposed to access the co-investment fund is a good thing. Right now, having our community relations advisor in place has been very positive. We're seeing a lot of outreach happening jointly with CMHC. Next week, we're travelling into Hay River. We've got some meetings in Hay River with the seniors' society, with some of the developers, meeting with the Metis, so the First Nations, Soaring Eagles Friendship Centre, West Point First Nation, KFN. We're getting the word out there that here's the fund; here's how to access it. The community relations advisor is serving as a navigator, as well, to help people to get their applications submitted, to get questions that they may have to seek answers from CMHC directly. It really has tied a close, working relationship with CMHC, a closer working relationship.

Right now, there's three applications here in Yellowknife that are very close. The letter of intents have been submitted, so they're very close for final approval. They'll be the first ones receiving funding under the co-investment. I think the funding is coming out of the national pot. There's been some movement on securing funding for the applications that didn't get approved through the rapid housing initiative. I think that was shared with the Members yesterday, so there's been some good progress. We're hoping that as the outreach continues with CMHC, we'll get more applications on the table, and we'll start seeing delivery. Hopefully, we'll see the first shovel in the ground this summer here in Yellowknife. We're excited. I think the big missing link was having, we have a dedicated resource now that is supporting clients and proponents who are accessing the fund. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. I think this is one of those success stories for all of us that we can kind of draw down some money. Previously with the co-investment fund, I know some of the tension has been that it's a 75 percent fund, and there's a bit of a debate about how much the GNWT will contribute. We have \$7.8 million allocated here. How much do we need to be able to say that we will contribute that 25 percent, and is that something that we are willing to do now? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have President Tom Williams respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you Madam Chair. We're very fortunate that we got the funding received through MFB. That \$5 million a year or \$15 million over three years is certainly going to help providing our cost share for these projects. Now, is that enough money? There's never enough money. It all depends on the volume of intake we get. Right now, we see it's sufficient for meeting the needs now. Hopefully, things are going to start moving quickly on this, and we'll get more applications coming forward. We know for a fact, one thing, NGO's, they don't have the financial capacities as, say, a private entity or Indigenous government. Most likely, we will have to contribute the full 25 percent like we committed to Arnica Inn and to the project in Hay River, the Hay River Family Services Centre. We know NGOs don't have the luxury of having the strong financial position. Again, there're other proponents that come in that they could get everything on a loan basis through the banks or through CMHC, and they need less of a portion for the co-investment application from the GNWT. Every application is different and they vary, but right now, we have the money. We're going to be spending it. Hopefully, we come back to get more money because there will be an increase in volume. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm glad to hear that, and yes, I just encourage the Minister to keep all MLAs apprised. If it gets to a point where we have a bunch of applications for 75 percent federal dollars sitting there but we don't have the money in the budget to make sure we draw it down,

please let us know and we can continue to try and fight for that money. Can I get an update? I'm looking at the new home program. I see last year, the last two years, there's been -- last year, there's \$1.7 million applied to this, but it's gone down \$1 million. Can I get an explanation for that decrease?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Vice-President Franklin Carpenter respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The new home program, we've had that in development. We were to roll it out earlier in the year, but COVID hit us for a little bit of a delay. What has happened, though, is we're trying to get back into building houses in rural and remote communities. There's been a lot of interest over the years for the Housing Corporation to do that from a past program from the mid-1980's to the late 1990's that is quite successful, and a majority of those homes are still in existence today. The problem we've run into is -- it could be related to COVID or just the changing times -- is the cost to construction has just gone through the roof for us, whereas I think I reported it to you last time I was here that for a modest, four-bedroom home that we wanted to have a big family in is well into exceeding \$1 million when you add up all the costs from shipping to labour, all the components.

Right now, it's on our drawing board to see what we can do to address that, and that includes talking to the contractors, all the suppliers, and many of you would know that they're hitting hard times, too, in finding supplies and their own subcontractors, too. Our hope is that we will still be able to get some of these built in some of these communities. It's a good design. It's a good concept that would hopefully move people out of public housing into these units, complete with a suite for seniors and/or a disabled person that might free up a space in a senior's unit in that community, as well, and alleviating pressures on our waiting lists. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I recognize that the Housing Corporation has to somewhat operate in the ever-increasing construction costs that the North faces to an exponential level in our rural and remote communities as compared to down south. I look forward to seeing the outcome of that work and if we can find some of those cost savings. I had one

last question. I'm looking at the lease commitments on page 386, and I see that there're 71 lease commitments here for units. I heard earlier that we leased 200 units. If it's finance or a reporting thing, can I get an explanation of why all of our leased units do not show up on the lease commitments? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. This would have been a question to be answered by Mr. Jim Martin. I can get back to the Member. Thank you.

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

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. My colleagues didn't leave me a lot of meat on the bone here, but I've got some high-level questions on page 383. Just some high-level questions, in terms of district operations that are decreased right across the board. I'm just wondering, to the Minister: will this take away from any sort of staffing or any sort of operational work? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can you repeat the question? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member.

MR. NORN: Thank you. Sorry, Madam Chair. District operations for each district, it just seems like there were decreases right across the board: for example, \$2.5 million for the South Slave, and even more so for the North Slave district. Again, it seems to level out with the program development. This is probably more of an accounting question, but can the Minister explain how this is and if there is going to be any sort of takeaway programming happening or any sort of operations? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Vice-President Franklin Carpenter respond.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. That was just a result of: we moved some money around in our programming because we were spending a fair bit more on our community housing support initiatives where communities are being more active in delivering some repair programming for us. It's just a movement of money around, not

an actual impact on the district office operations itself. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I figured there was some sort of accounting wizardry going on. Thank you. One thing I get a lot of inquiries on in my constituency is the fuel tank replacement. I am just wondering if this is being utilized to its full extent for this line item. Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Vice-President Franklin Carpenter respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: My apologies, Madam Chair. I didn't catch the last part of that question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): If our fuel tank replacement fund was being fully utilized.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The question was whether our fuel tank fund was fully utilized. Our answer from our end is that all the eligible applicants that we have had were approved for that program.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The reason I ask is this is a really important program, especially when it comes to things like insurance because a lot of insurance companies have stringent requirements on having such things as double-walled fuel tanks. They have to be certain specs; otherwise, they won't insure them. They will usually have exclusion there if they don't. My other question on this was: how much of this program is subscribed outside of Yellowknife? That's what I was trying to get at. Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Carpenter respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The usage of this program is primarily in rural and remote communities. They are the ones most active in using it. Since we rolled it out in 2017-2018, we are up to about 134 eligible people who have used

it. Out of that, it has only been used in Yellowknife one time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you. That's good to know. Other than that, I don't have any other questions. I think a lot of the questions were asked by my colleagues. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under programs and district operations? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. It was mentioned there the cost of building. Because of COVID, what we have seen is a rise in building material. Just to give you an example: probably a year and a half ago, to buy a sheet of 3/8 OSB was around \$15; it is now \$51 a sheet. I am just wondering. I see these numbers remaining the same. Are we looking to the federal government to offset some of those rising costs of materials? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Tom Williams respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Certainly, the whole construction industry has seen an increase in material costs. Lumber went up 70 percent. It is impacting our budgets. I think what we have to do is we have to be diligent when we do our tendering and making sure that we get the right tenders out. Sometimes, we have to change the project design. It could be design things where we have to modify the design to reduce cost. It is a fluid thing.

Going to the federal government, they will be reimbursing us for our investment that we put into the repair program that we had for COVID. That's a good, positive thing. Some of that money will be put back into the system, back into our infrastructure programming to make sure that we have sufficient money for our contracts. We will have to build a case, continue to build a case, to maybe have an ask for the federal government to reimburse us for the increased costs. Every jurisdiction in the country is faced with it. Us in the North, we see it probably more dramatic than southern Canada, for sure. Yes, it is a good point the Member is raising, and we certainly will have to look into that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just going down to securing assistance for emergencies, can you give me an idea of how these funds are used? What type of emergencies are we talking about? Are they kind of the same ones or a real wide range? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Vice-President Carpenter respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe it would be safe to say that about 90 percent of that program is subscribed during the winter months for heating and plumbing issues primarily. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. In Hay River, we have a number of houses with wooden basements. With frost and that, we have basements being pushed in. Would that program cover an emergency like that? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Vice-President Carpenter respond.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The answer is: yes, it would, if the cost was \$10,000 or less. However, we have a major repair program that could be used for that purpose, as well, that has a larger budget in it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Going to seniors aging in place retrofits and repairs, one of the things that I see is that, as people get older and they are either using walkers or are in wheelchairs and that, ramps are a big thing. Ramps were around \$15,000 to \$20,000, but with the price of lumber now, we are probably looking at \$35,000 to \$40,000 for a ramp, which seems outrageous, but that's just what it is.

One of the issues is that seniors who actually have a government pension or private pension, they may be over the threshold. Yet, if we were to provide that support, something as simple as that, it would allow them to continue to stay in their home, and we wouldn't have to try and find something else for them. How do we treat the seniors differently, the ones who are under the threshold and over? Do we just say no and yes? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Vice-President Carpenter respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have a couple of items that will be of significant benefit to that question. The first one is that we've updated our core need income thresholds. They are set to be official on April 1st of this year, and they have gone up significantly over all the communities, just off the top of my head roughly by \$20,000. That's one benefit. The other benefit that was seen as a barrier over the years that we've made the change to, as well, is that we're only going to assess the incomes of the seniors in the house if they're the owners of the house. A lot of times before, applications were not moving forward because there were children living in the homes and their incomes put people over the threshold. Those two changes we see are going to be of significant benefit to seniors and private homeowners. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I'm pleased to hear that. Going back to Hay River, I'm sure I'll get questions on that and be able to at least provide some positive news. One last question is: of course, due to the pandemic, employees were required to work from home, and now we've seen people head back into the offices. Can the Minister tell me if the district offices are fully staffed again, or are there still people working from home? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Vice-President Carpenter respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, all our district offices are fully staffed.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you. That's all.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Are there any further questions under programs and district operations? Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. No. Just in regard to providing assistance for territorial home ownership for the communities, how is the uptake in the Nunakput communities? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Vice-President Carpenter respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. That particular program is a down payment program to purchase or build a new home. That program is almost entirely subscribed in the major centres, where there is access to buy home and it's easier to get financing. It's not generally used in the communities. In the communities, the home ownership options are generally taken up by people acquiring whatever homes are available for sale there. Their public housing units, it will be through the new units we plan to build. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regard to the uptake for the houses that are in the community that people are living in, Sachs Harbour, for instance, if somebody wants to buy a house there, what's the uptake on that in regard to somebody local? Because we were dealing with that about a month and a half ago. How is that going? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Vice-President Carpenter respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I mentioned earlier that we've made significant changes to our purchase programming that will

enable people in public housing to transition to home ownership. We think that is going to have a positive impact in all the rural and remote communities, even Sachs Harbour. We do have people waiting for us right now to convert. We're just putting the final tweaks on our systems. They are just days away, and we're going to reach out to those folks. I am aware of the household in Sachs Harbour. We've been in contact with them, and we're going to be ready to go with them very shortly. It's going to be a positive thing for those communities. I think, where there are homeowners who have the incomes to transition, want to transition, then we'll make it happen. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the deputy minister for that. I really would like to make sure that, in regard to seniors aging in place, are the LHOs in the communities helping them to provide tanks, any home repairs, any programs? Are the LHOs providing that service to make sure that any of the programs that the housing authority is providing, are they reaching out to the community, and how are they doing it? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The programs are provided by the district offices, and the LHOs are there just as guidance to the district offices. I will have Mr. Carpenter respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. As part of our promotion and work to transition as many people to homeowners as possible in rural and remote communities, part of the success is if they have access to services and supplies. In those small communities, I mean, I've lived in them and they don't have hardware available to them. Right now, it's kind of ad hoc. We're going to formalize that, that they can buy parts from us or access parts and supplies through our programming. In terms of services, same thing. Just the one thing we have to watch for is that we're not interrupting any local business. In those cases, we will utilize the local business under our programming. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you. The community housing support initiative co-investment fund, how

does that work? Say, we've been pushing for elders' facilities, like homecare for elders in the communities. Ulukhaktok and Paulatuk are looking at it, and potentially Tuktoyaktuk. How does the uptake on that, to work together, build it and they will come? Or work with somebody who is able to build it, and then the co-investment, are they able to take on the lease, working with the community, say the community corporations? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The co-investment fund is accepted per application and the Housing Corporation supports the initiative of the completion of those applications, but the determination of looking at seniors' housing to be available, that would be a community initiative project. We have several throughout the Northwest Territories. The staff has been travelling throughout the territory and acquiring different types of housing needs specific to what they are applying for. I'll have Mr. Carpenter elaborate. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The difficulty with the co-investment fund is that it's capital funding and it's not operational funding, which is difficult even for us to provide. In terms of the Member's questions related to seniors' units in the Beaufort region, absolutely, there is a strong case. Definitely, Ulukhaktok needs one; even Paulatuk. We've got a pretty good one up in Tuktoyaktuk already, but it's the O and M, so we have to be a bit creative. We are, on our end, trying to work with different stakeholders in the region to get capital or through different federal pots. We certainly could build those big centres there, I think, and convert some of our existing units used for seniors for other purposes, such as there is a huge demand in the region of housing for professionals, such as teachers; a big need up there that we have to find creative ways to get housing in there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. If we are able to find builders to come and build it, they will come, seriously, in regard to getting either elders' facilities, two-bedroom houses, nine-plexes, or something like that. Is there any funding that we could tap into with the community to access these dollars to make it happen, like for the mortgage and pay the rent through ECE? You know, for elders,

anyway. Something to work with like that, is that available? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have President Williams respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Certainly, co-investment is the avenue. It's capital dollars that are allocated. For Indigenous governments, it's up to 95 percent. We want to reach out, and we have been reaching out, to our Indigenous partners. Actually, there is a session coming up in the Beaufort-Delta next month, I believe, where we're going to be reaching out with the community corporations. We're going to host a meeting in Inuvik for GTC and IRC, just to get interest in co-investment because, really, what I always envisioned is the Indigenous development corporations would have a big role to play on those deliveries. We had discussions, preliminary discussions, with IRC, and there is an interest. They know there is a need in Ulukhaktok, and they are willing to push something forward. It's just the next step is to have discussions on co-investment and how they could access that funding, to put their business case forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. No. I just look forward to that. I always bring up our community corporations because every community in my riding has a community corporation, has a business and development corporation, and I know that they would be willing to work with this co-investment. I look forward to hearing back from the Minister and her department in regard to that meeting next month and the uptake of those projects that could come available. That is just a comment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Are there any further questions to programs and district operations? Seeing none, thank you, Members. There is an additional item, I think, that Member Johnson already spoke to on page 386, so the lease commitments. If there are no further questions to that one page, I would like to thank the Members. Please return now to the departmental summary found of page 369. Any final questions? Thank you. Does committee agree that consideration of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is completed? Mr. Norn.

COMMITTEE MOTION 86-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 286-19(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2021-2022 - NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES HOUSING CORPORATION -
DEFERRAL OF DEPARTMENT,
CARRIED

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation 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 the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, operations expenditures, total department, is deferred. 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: Marsi cho. I move that the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. 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.

MR. SPEAKER: 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. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Do we have a seconder? Member for Deh Cho. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 23, 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 Thursday, March 11, 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
 - Question 654-19(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 31-19(2), Extended Adjournment of the House to March 29, 2021
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act
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
- Tabled Document 348-19(20), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2020-2021
- Tabled Document 349-19(20), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2020-2021
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 7:40 p.m.