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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	3481
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	3481
Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Mission, Values and Vision (Chinna)	3481
Celebrating Indigenous Languages Month (Simpson)	3482
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	3483
Constituent Housing Issues (Martselos)	3483
Housing Priorities (Rocky Simpson)	3484
Co-Investment Fund (O'Reilly)	3484
Housing (Jacobson).....	3485
Housing (Nokleby).....	3485
Housing (Bonnetrouge).....	3486
Housing in Whati (Weyallon-Armstrong).....	3486
Housing (Cleveland).....	3487
Housing Partnerships (Johnson).....	3487
International Decade of Indigenous Languages (R.J. Simpson).....	3488
Eulogy for Bill Rowe (Thompson)	3488
REPLIES TO BUDGET ADDRESS	3488
ORAL QUESTIONS	3490
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	3501
NOTICES OF MOTION	3501
Motion 49-19(2) – Referral of Minister's Statement 202-19(2) and Tabled Document 567-19(2) to Committee of the Whole	3501
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	3501
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	3521
ORDERS OF THE DAY	3521

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, February 24, 2022****Members Present**

Hon. Diane Archie, Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Mr. Edjericon, Hon. Julie Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Martselos, Ms. Nokleby, Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Ms. Weyallon-Armstrong

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Ms. Lesa Semmler.): Ministers' Statements. Minister for Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Employment.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 204-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING
CORPORATION MISSION, VALUES AND VISION

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Madam Speaker, on November 24th I rose before the House to announce a strategy for renewal of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation - a strategy that is focused on taking action to address the housing crisis in the Northwest Territories. I am very pleased to rise again today to announce that, guided by the strategy, we are continuing to take action and set the stage for real, positive change.

Madam Speaker, in a motion on March 4, 2021, this Legislative Assembly told the Government of the Northwest Territories to update the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's mission statement to ensure it reflects the corporation's role in social wellness. I have heard the Members and I acknowledge and share their desire for change. That is why one of the first actions in the strategy is to review and update the corporation's mission statement.

During the fall, we collected input on the motion from the Legislative Assembly from the large volume of existing reports and directions, including the NWT ombud and from the corporation's own staff. We also asked the Council of Leaders Housing Working Group for input on the future and direction of the corporation. This input has resulted in its mandate for the Housing Corporation's composed of a new statement of mission, values, and a vision.

Madam Speaker, the corporation's new mission focuses on the wellbeing of individuals, on fairness, and on providing support to those most in need, recognizing the Housing Corporation is about more

than building houses. We are part of an integrated support system composed of other government departments and partnerships. At the time, limited resources we needed to focus that supports on those who are most in need.

The new mandate also describes six values to guide the corporation. They are:

- Client focused;
- Accountability;
- Reconciliation;
- Collaboration;
- Innovation; and
- Sustainability.

Madam Speaker, these values reflect a more modern and client-focused approach to the work of the Corporation.

Finally, Madam Speaker, the mandate includes a vision statement which, until now, was missing from the Housing Corporation's mandate. The vision recognizes that meeting the territory's housing need is bigger than any other single government or organization. It is critical that we work in partnership with the Indigenous groups, the Government of Canada, community governments, and other stakeholders to reach our housing goals.

Madam Speaker, I realize that some people might say that a new mission, values, and vision for the corporation is just a piece of paper. People may ask, "What real impact will the mandate have on the ground for residents and communities across the Northwest Territories?"

Our new mandate will serve as the measure of everything that the corporation does. It will serve as a lens through which we undertake the review of the Housing Corporation's policies and programs in the next steps of the renewal. It will also guide the corporation's relationship with the public, with the clients, and with its partners as it strives to address the housing gap in the Northwest Territories.

Madam Speaker, I would like to read the corporation's new mission into the records because I am very proud of the new direction it sets. The

Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's new mission is to increase the well-being of individual and communities by providing fair access to quality housing support for people most in need.

I give my firm commitment to the Legislative Assembly that, as Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, my direction to the corporation will consist with our mission, values and vision, which I will be tabling later today.

Madam Speaker, I am excited about this new mandate and where the next steps in the renewal process will take us. I look forward to rising again in the House soon and providing Members with another update on the actions we are taking under our renewal strategy, helping the GNWT meet its mandate commitment to increase the number of affordable homes and reduce housing core need in the Northwest Territories. With this Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the staff of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, all stakeholders, and Indigenous groups that have taken part to make this document and for me to table it today..

Mahsi to the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' Statements. Minister for Education, Culture and Employment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 205-19(2):
CELEBRATING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES
MONTH

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Madam Speaker, "Let's Go Fishing." That's the theme of this year's Indigenous Languages Month, which we celebrate every February in partnership with Indigenous governments and the NWT Literacy Council. To help everyone embrace this year's celebration, we are sharing a delicious fish chowder recipe in all nine official Indigenous languages. Throughout February, we continue to encourage residents to engage in the exciting activities in communities and schools to promote Indigenous language use.

Madam Speaker, the Northwest Territories is a landscape of rich and vibrant cultures that are the foundation of our northern identity. Our nine official Indigenous languages capture the diversity of our territory and make it truly unique. As leaders and residents, we share the responsibility of revitalizing our Cree, Inuvialuit, Dene, and Metis cultures and languages through education and practice.

Our Indigenous Languages Action Plan has two main goals:

- Revitalizing Indigenous languages; and

- Enhancing access to government services in Indigenous languages.

And over the past year, we have continued to work diligently towards these goals. In 2021, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment hosted two virtual interpreter/translator gatherings that included 43 participants. At these gatherings, the department heard a range of needs for support and training,

Including

- the need for technology, linguistics, and specialized training;
- The need for accreditation and certification opportunities;
- Resource development; and
- The need to recruit more Indigenous language speakers to join this profession.

Based on this feedback, the department is researching potential partnerships to offer training and supports to new and existing interpreters and translators.

In July 2021, the department launched the second delivery of the Mentor-Apprentice Program, and it was bigger and better than ever. The amount of language learning hours was increased from 100 to 200, and the length of the program was increased from four to eight months.

Although the program runs until March 2022, 35 pairs of apprentices and mentors have already completed the required training for six language groups:

- Dene Zhatye
- Inuvialuktun
- Gwich'in
- Dene Kede
- Tlicho
- Dene Souyne

A final gathering of mentors and apprentices is being planned for next month. It will include a program evaluation, training, and an evening gala that will showcase apprentices speaking in their languages.

Madam Speaker, 2022 marks the fourth year of the GNWT's Indigenous Languages Revitalization Scholarship Program. This year, ten \$5,000 scholarships will be available to students who are registered in an accredited post-secondary program with a focus on Indigenous language revitalization. To date, there have been 31 scholarships that have

been awarded to incentivize students to pursue studies focusing on Indigenous language revitalization.

In 2021, the department also updated the NWT JK-12 Indigenous Languages and Education Handbook. The handbook provides educators with a user-friendly guide to implement the Indigenous Language Education Policy, ensuring quality, culture-based school programming, and a whole-school approach to Indigenous language use. Contributions to the handbook were made by elders and knowledge-keepers, regional Indigenous language and education coordinators, Indigenous language instructors, other educators, community members, and students.

Rooted in the wisdom, traditions, and lived-experience of the elders and knowledge-keepers that guided the creation of the Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit curricula, all educators can draw upon this resource to strengthen Indigenous language education and support language revitalization in the territory. The updated handbook will be distributed to school staff in the coming months.

Revitalizing Indigenous language takes ingenuity, commitment, and courage. I have heard it from the people in the Mentor-Apprentice Program - it takes courage to start and courage to make mistakes and courage to learn. Madam Speaker, I would like to test my own courage.

[Translation unavailable]

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member for Thebacha. This is the first of four theme days in this sitting, so Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 934-19(2): CONSTITUENT HOUSING ISSUE

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, along with the rest of my colleagues here, I have a whole host of housing-related issues with my constituents in my community. I could go on about general issues relating the NWT Housing Corp, however today I am going to focus on one constituent.

This is an elderly man who is nearly 80 years old and has been dealing with increased health problems including a recent heart attack and even contracting COVID-19, not to mention he and his wife being

homeless temporarily after their home was destroyed nearly three years ago.

Madam Speaker, this constituent endured a tornado in June 2019 which severely damaged his home to the point that it was unlivable. In other words, his home was totalled, and since that time his life has been turned upside down in dealing with the after effects.

Since I was elected, I have been doing everything I can to help with the situation. I've gone to the housing minister at least a dozen times, trying to get this constituent fair treatment in the aftermath of a natural disaster. Madam Speaker, after this constituent's home was destroyed, the Northwest Territories Housing Corp did an assessment of his property and gave him a very lowball park offer to purchase his land. Then he was put into a public housing unit but his rental costs have been very high for him to manage. In fact, there is a major discrepancy regarding the level of rent he's currently paying.

Based on the housing corp's own pamphlet on public housing and subsidized rental housing, he is paying too much for his monthly rent under his current monthly income. Even with the combined income of his spouse, my constituent is still paying more than he should be.

Madam Speaker, this is someone who has worked 44 years for the territorial government in various capacities. He was devoted public servant who did everything right to provide for himself and his family, but he has been receiving the short end of the stick in his dealings with the NWT Housing Corporation since his home was destroyed. To treat a former long-time public employee and a residential school survivor like this is not acceptable. To make matters worse, this whole experience has made my constituent go into debt as he's always been supporting his family with various costs, including post-secondary education. Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to finish my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

In closing, Madam Speaker, it is not right at all for our government to treat this constituent's situation of a natural disaster in some a different way compared to other victims of natural disasters in the NWT. I'm grateful that the flood victims of Fort Simpson and Jean Marie got complete compensation there. The same treatment should be extended to my constituent because it was an act of God and should be treated as a natural disaster. My constituent is sad and feels he has been forgotten. I will have questions for the Minister of Housing later today. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 935-19(2):
HOUSING PRIORITIES

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, housing was identified and continues to be our priority for this government and, more importantly, it is a basic need that has a significant impact on one's quality of life and potentially 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 – and we continue down that same path.

We found our past approach to be flawed and through renewal we are hoping to see positive change. It is important to give a new approach flexibility that allows for adapting to change without having to start at square one.

Madam Speaker, many who look to the NWT Housing Corporation for public housing, do so because there are no other options. People come to us, as MLAs, and plead for help. They go to their Indigenous representatives and plead for help. Yet, there is nothing we can say or do that will provide any hope or comfort to a long-standing problem, which is lack of public housing.

Indigenous People in need of housing need not only pressure this government, but must pressure Indigenous and federal governments as well. Our focus must be on solutions that will fill the many units sitting empty in our communities, place new units on those vacant lands owned by the NWT Housing Corporation or Indigenous governments, and increase program funding.

Madam Speaker, I must give credit to the department on the timing and purchase of the Nordic Arms Apartment complex in YK. The per door cost will be considerably less than constructing a new complex or building 24 single-detached homes. Following that acquisition, I will now be looking to the Minister and her department to begin planning a residential complex in Hay River for seniors and one for singles and couples. Land has been sitting vacant for several years and it is time make use of it.

Madam Speaker, the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation and her team have made some good decisions which we need to see expanded throughout the NWT. We now see Indigenous governments taking on housing initiatives, seeking solutions that work for their communities, dealing directly with the federal government and using own resources for delivery. If we expect ongoing results, we need cooperation amongst all level of governments with Indigenous

governments taking the lead. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 936-19(2):
CO-INVESTMENT FUND

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. On January 25th of this year, there was another announcement about funding for 29 houses being built in small communities. That's all good but it got me thinking about that federal co-investment carve out for \$60 million that was set aside for the NWT.

After the last Cabinet failed to make housing a priority, we got very little under the National Housing Strategy, but that's another story.

Recently I got an accounting of the funds spent and used under the NWT co-investment carve out. \$25.5 million of this amount was allocated to the NWT Housing Corp to assist with the construction of 60 public housing units and the remaining \$34.5 million was allocated to Indigenous governments and organizations to create 66 affordable homes through a combination of repair and new construction projects.

As for the cost share requirements, the NWT Housing Corp has had to utilize its own fiscal resources to supplement the \$25.5 million federal funding for the delivery of the 60 public housing units. Unforeseen construction cost increases are going to cost the Housing Corp another \$6 million in internal resources. And there could be more.

It's not clear what funding the Indigenous governments and other organizations had to put up to access the NWT co-investment carve out. The average cost of a new housing unit, using these funds, amounts to about \$520,000. I guess that's good but I wonder whether we can do any better and what this will mean for the O and M costs for the NWT Housing Corp. I also wonder whether other NWT organizations have been successful in accessing the National Co-Investment Fund and what, if any, support has been given by the NWT Housing Corporation. What is clear, Madam Speaker, is that the NWT Housing Corporation needs improved communications with its clients, MLAs, and the public. I will have lots of questions later today for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 937-19(2):
HOUSING

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I'll continue to talk about the needs of my riding of housing.

Recent surveys shows the population of Paulatuk has increased by 33 people, it's up to 297. But unfortunately the survey showed that the number of houses in the community has declined 8 percent. Currently 81 homes in Paulatuk for 298 people. Of these 81 homes, 23 of these units are in core need, Madam Speaker. That means that either the home is not adequate, affordable, suitable for the people to live in the community.

Yesterday we heard from the Minister we have 15 people. When I asked, we have 15 to 17 people on the waitlist. But I'm hearing different. I'm hearing it's almost up to 28 people in the community, which is around five families, Madam Speaker.

Almost 10 percent of the community is essentially homelessness and couch surfing. So it's a significant number of people without homes which leads to overcrowding and just hardships, pressure on everybody.

2019, 16 percent of the homes in Paulatuk, six people or more living inside. That was nearly 13 overcrowded homes in the community. Madam Speaker, Paulatuk, we have 81 homes, 298 people, 81 of those homes are -- 23 of those homes are not adequate or suitable but we're still using them and we'll keep fixing them. We have to give those units to the community, to the people that want to take over those houses so we can add into the housing core, Madam Speaker. Again, 15 to 17 people when the community says 28, people in core need of housing.

Under the United Nations Act, 130 litres of water per day per person and our government gets \$35,000 per year to provide service for every constituent across the territory. We need to start working together to getting housing core need in our communities. And then like I said yesterday, Madam Speaker in my Member's statements that we have to look at it a different way. We have to get Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and the community corporations to get on board to start pushing to get houses for the community and working together for a stronger better Beaufort Delta and Nunakput. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Members' statements. Member for Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 938-19(2):
HOUSING

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Northview Real Estate Investment Trust, or REIT, was formed in 1986 by former GNWT civil

servants that eventually evolved into a publicly-traded company allowing individual investors to buy shares in real estate portfolios. Northview holds thousands of residential and commercial units in Yellowknife and Iqaluit. Sources vary on how much they own, but it's estimated to be between 50 to 80 percent of the rental market.

In 2018, 28 percent of Northview's operating income was derived in northern Canada. REITs are recognized as financialized landlords and the largest landlords for multi-family rental units across Canada with the most significant penetration into markets with weak rent control.

In a recent study of tight rental markets like those in the North, it is stated that REITs do the minimum to maintain their buildings while charging higher rents because tenants are desperate. This leads to issues with mold, water damage, pest infestations, and all kinds of frustrations as people have no other choice.

On November 2nd, 2020, Northview Apartment REIT was purchased by two Toronto firms for \$4.9 billion. The purchase was considered stable as 66 percent of their leases held in the territories were secured by government or credit-rated corporations. Rent was increased across the board by \$300, and with the control of so many units, the market prices continued to skyrocket in Yellowknife well beyond affordability.

In Yellowknife, nearly 35 percent of the entire housing stock was built before 1980, and another 45 percent was added during the '80s and '90s. With supply chains increasingly disrupted through the pandemic, the cost of construction materials and supplies required for housing construction and maintenance have continued to rise, driving up housing prices to unaffordable levels.

The average home price in Yellowknife rose to just below \$486,000 in 2021, an all-time high, with average sale prices increasing by 22 percent year over year.

In 2018, the City of Yellowknife conducted a point-in-time homelessness count and found that 338 people were experiencing homelessness in the city with a significant overrepresentation of Indigenous people, particularly children and youth.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 42 percent, or 142 of those enumerated, were age 24 or younger with 104 of those being children under the age of 18. Significantly, the count identified that 90 percent of the city's homeless identified as Indigenous compared to the city overall at 23 percent. A large portion of the homeless in Yellowknife are from other

communities due in part to inadequate housing in those home communities.

The terrible state of our housing market means that for far too long residents, and in particular Indigenous residents, have had to choose between a roof over their heads or feeding their families; a choice that, in my opinion, is impossible to make and should be a source of deep shame for our government and nation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 939-19(2):
HOUSING

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, within the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, there's always been concerns about the rising cost of electrical power and heating fuel usage to all their rental units. I believe I've offered up suggestions as to how to combat the fuel usage and the rising cost of the diesel fuel in the past by incorporating wood pellet boiler systems to their units as a central unit which is when a central heating system is set up, it can heat up to multiple units. And I'm not talking about the apartment buildings. This is like replacing -- if you have five house, you have five furnaces, five fuel tanks, that's a lot of fuel usage. When you put a central heating system, like a wood pellet boiler, you can connect all five units which is saving you, you can realize significant savings then. Because, you know, biomass district heating systems reduce reliance on imported fuels, reduce fuel consumption and provide, you know, significant savings overall to the utility costs. And it's known to cut greenhouse gas emissions which we're trying to reach at some point. And we're just not getting there with housing.

I recall back in 2014, I'm just recalling from memory, that we sent a few ministers, or MLAs at that time, to Norway to look at the wood pellet boiler systems and I think it was to introduce them into the NWT. Mind you, those two MLAs, or Ministers, were Ministers of Housing Corporation at some point. But nothing was ever incorporated at that time which is quite surprising considering, you know, the rising cost of living to all residents of the Northwest Territories, even people that rent. And it just shocks me that we haven't even contemplated that yet. We're in the 19th Assembly. And with that, I'm going to have questions for the Minister of Northwest Territories Housing Corporation at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 940-19(2):
HOUSING IN WHATI

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Later today, I will be tabling photos of the home of a constituent from Whati.

The Housing Corporation is asking this constituent to sign a refinance agreement for \$140,000. Madam Speaker, the photos I will table later today show that this House has a lot of problems. Madam Speaker, they are using assessed value, not actual value, to determine how much the house and property is worth, which is another way of saying Housing Corporation decides on its own how much the house is worth. Most places in Canada, the price of houses are determined by market value. Quote, "The price at which an asset will sell for in the competitive setting." End of quotation.

Madam Speaker, there is no competitive setting outside of the capital and regional centres in the Northwest Territories. Since Housing owns most homes in small NWT communities, people have no choice but to accept the deal Housing Corporation gives them or they become homeless. There is a clear power imbalance between the buyer and seller.

This buyer feels she has no choice but to sign. She does not want the nine people living in the house or the newborn baby to become homeless. In this case, the Housing Corporation is asking for \$140,000 for a house that does not even have a flushing toilet and is in poor condition. Madam Speaker, this is my understanding of assessed value works in simple terms.

In 2017, I purchased my car for \$60,000. Today, its market value is \$20,000. Madam Speaker, if Housing was to sell my car, they would assess its value and try to sell it for \$60,000 purchase price. It is unfair for the person buying that car to pay more than \$20,000 market value. Madam Speaker, can I have unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

People buying these houses are overpaying for a house that is going to depreciate in value over time just so they do not get put on the street. There is no housing market in small communities. Very few homes are ever bought or sold. Madam Speaker, there should be an ombudsman or a third party to oversee the sale of houses and ensure houses are fairly valued.

I think in these situations, the Housing Corporation has a conflict of interest. On one hand, they are mandated and government-funded to provide programs to the people. On the other hand, they act like a corporation to try and turn profit. I think that is why the public distrusts the Housing Corporation. Madam Speaker, I think the Housing Corporation should become a department of the Government of the Northwest Territories and cease to be a

corporation so they can act only in the best interests of families and NWT residents. Madam Speaker, I will have questions for Minister of Housing at appropriate time. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 941-19(2):
HOUSING

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. When providing public housing, the government should not be paying market rent. However, Madam Speaker, as we know, right now in order to get an income housing allowance you must be placed on a public housing waitlist. Why is this? It's because we know providing people housing in public housing we own is cheaper than paying market rent. Yet despite this, presently income assistance is paying market rent for 885 people at a cost of \$7.3 million a year. Additionally, our own Housing Corporation is paying another \$3 million in market rent to Northview instead of building public housing, Madam Speaker. We need to build and own and operate more public housing.

We hear this continued concern about operations and maintenance. Where are we going to find the O and M money? Well, it's in the ECE income assistance budget presently, Madam Speaker. There is \$7.3 million of operating money that we are giving to private landlords, predominantly in Yellowknife, predominantly to Northview, which could be hundreds of public housing units built. I will have questions for the Minister of Housing about whether and when we are going to build some more public housing and actually put an end to our public housing waitlist which, right now, is simply being paid at market rents well above what the rate should be. We save money by building housing. We save it in health, we save it in justice, and we save it in income assistance. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 942-19(2):
HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yesterday as my child got dressed for hockey, children in the Ukraine braced for war. As Russia makes the worst kind of history, we must grapple with the best way to be activists for humanity. Again, we face the interconnectedness of the world.

Two years ago, I stood in this House and spoke about the rising cost of construction and healthcare and the vulnerability of the North to surprise events ranging from faulty sterilization machines at the new

hospital to climate change, the global pandemic, and now a war that will continue to escalate costs and uncertainty everywhere.

We need to approach this vulnerability differently or simply be overwhelmed by it. Our business-as-usual solution to our priority issues, like social housing, is to throw more money at it. This is a game the NWT cannot win. Supply chain disruptions, labour shortages, and unpredictable inflation will keep us chasing escalating capital and operating costs with little hope of keeping pace. In addition, housing cost challenges across the territory will have huge impacts on housing costs in Yellowknife. We need different solutions.

CMHC recognized this issue through yesterday's \$80 million announcement to drive innovative specific to northern housing logistic supply chain and trained labour issues. They recognize building housing the way we are doing it today isn't working. Working within our budget requires creativity, trusted partnerships, and collaborative leadership.

Madam Speaker, the Housing Corporation told this House during our first budget cycle the solution to our northern housing problem is half a billion dollars or partnerships and preferably both. The federal \$40 billion National Housing Strategy has made it clear they would like to work with Indigenous governments and NGOs to get this money moving across Canada. We must facilitate those partnerships. Examples of successful public-private partnerships for public housing exist across Canada. Co-operative ventures between the public and private sectors and Indigenous governments are building on the expertise and each partner to share cost, revenue, and responsibility. Fair financial relationships between all parties need to be signed with a common unified goal of housing as a fundamental factor of thriving communities. Examples of this already exist.

The Housing Corporation has transferred vacant stock to Indigenous organizations to renovate with federal dollars. Transferring to NGOs for federal capital grants and has worked with viable and third party construction companies to build housing while the corporation takes on the long-term obligations of operations and maintenance without the capital cost. Everybody wins but no one does it all. Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement, please.

---Unanimous consent granted.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. These are all great examples, but they are exceptions rather than the rule, Madam Speaker. Finding and supporting these partnerships need to become our priority Number 1. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Hay River North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 943-19(2):
INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF INDIGENOUS
LANGUAGES

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I am sorry to ruin the theme day here, but I want to talk about a different topic.

As members are aware, it is Indigenous Languages Month and the Members may not be aware but the UN also declared 2022 to 2032 the international decade of Indigenous languages. I think this is a monumental event, and I'm always happy when I hear Members of this House speak in Indigenous languages. My colleague from Boot Lake, the Member for Yellowknife South I've heard, of course our Member for Monfwi, and I think that to mark not just Indigenous Languages Month but the international decade of Indigenous languages, that as an Assembly we should take this opportunity and every Member of this Assembly should take an opportunity to speak in an Indigenous language at least once during this Assembly. I think that we can have all 21 Members of this Assembly having used an Indigenous language in this House, and I think that would be absolutely amazing and something to be proud of. So, Madam Speaker, I challenge all Members, including yourself, to use an Indigenous language before the end of this Assembly. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Quyananni, Member. Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 944-19(2):
EULOGY FOR BILL ROWE

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, William Rowe, no ordinary man with no middle name as he was the middle of Rowe's family. He was born on August 24th, 1931. His mother said she ran out of names and one was good enough. That was Bill, one of a kind but so unique that she would always remember him.

Son to Joseph and Maryanne Rowe, he was a brother to 11 siblings, father to six children, and many grandchildren and great grandchildren. He would always say his best accomplishment was his family.

Bill left home at the age of 17 to find his way in the world. He was fond of mechanics and had become successful as a general contractor and founder of Rowe's Construction and JM Ranch.

On January 28, 1953, Bill married a foxy red, a red fox, Rita Ruth Lockhart and they had many, many adventures for 67 years together. With the passing

of Rita, Bill remained strong for the family however he always missed his little red fox.

Bill and Rita spent 30 years in the north, over 40 years in Berwyn, Alberta, where their home was and the place that captured their heart. They would still come north to visit their family and friends throughout this time.

During his service, the family passed on the following message to his neighbours and friends: Their father wanted them to know how much he respected and truly valued their time, friendship throughout his life. Bill lived by the Golden Rule, treat one another as you wish to be treated. He loved to laugh, a beer, and his friends and family.

Madam Speaker, I had the honour knowing Mr. Bill Rowe throughout most of my life, and I can say he did live by his Golden Rule.

Madam Speaker, he will be missed by his children, their spouses, and all their family. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Our hearts and prayers are with the family. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Replies to budget address day 3 of 7. Member for Nunakput.

Replies to Budget Address

MR. JACOBSON'S REPLY

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today's budget address for Nunakput is -- this is what I'd like to see I guess in our budget if we could do anything, roughly 17 million or 4 percent of the GNWT's capital budget will be spent in Nunakput riding. How much of that operational budget is spent in my riding?

In Nunakput, we are in the High Arctic, the most remote communities, coldest darkest region. They don't have basic services that it can be a matter of survival, Madam Speaker. For instance, just last year in Ulukhaktok when the internet went down and a storm approaching, people couldn't access money to pay for gas, food, and basic supplies. Services with internet services need to be looked at in the communities. Service is essential and critical in my riding, Madam Speaker. They are lacking the basic services. We need improvements to ambulance services. We need improvements to transportation and bus services for the communities. Housing, housing's the biggest concern I have, Madam Speaker, in my riding. It's the health of the residents in our region. It's just overcrowding. We have to fix this issue. We have -- it's so hard on younger families. You know, you have to go live with your parents and you have one bedroom and there's three

of you in it, and I have been dealing with constituents like that, and I have a 29 -- I was just told that they're number 29 on the waiting list. That's unacceptable. We have to work together. We can't have lip service no more. We have to work with the Housing Corporation, not just our government. It's our local community governments too. It's our Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Inuvialuit Development Corporation, trying to work with the community corp to try to get houses built. We have to look at a different way. All I hear in this last week I've been here are, you know, our government's broke. We have to look at other avenues to find money. Finding that money is working with outside corporations to provide housing for the people. As long as they could get a long-term lease agreement in place, I'm pretty sure we can go down that road to providing service for our constituents.

When we're reducing our waitlist again, we have to get everything sorted out with our vacancies, housing vacancies, housing improvements, not just waiting for summer. We have to get things done as soon as possible. We can expect our, you know, families are growing, young parents, houses in need, and most of them are major repair, a lot of them. And those houses, we have to address the critical issues.

The critical issues in my riding, again, is housing. We need a business partner. We got to look out and work with the people. The private sector's willing to invest in solutions in my region. It needs to remove the barriers that they create as the Housing Corporation. Businesses need long-term lease commitments and partnerships need solutions in my riding. We need to find ways to take over the mortgages or just give old Housing HAP houses away. You can't pay \$140,000 house when you don't even have a flush toilet in some of the communities that we represent. Unacceptable. We need to find ways, again, Madam Speaker, to get rid of the mortgages that don't need and give it away. Take it out of our housing stock, and then we're able to add.

We need to complete community housing plans like I've been working on for Nunakput. We need to get the housing plan set for each community we represent and getting our housing board, not the local housing board but a board that could work with the community corp and liaison in what's needed in that community, especially elders facilities. Because I got an aging population now, in my riding. I got people with dementia that's really -- I have five or six people in one of my communities that I represent that will be getting moved to Inuvik long term. And soon as that happens, that's no good because you'll never see them again.

Housing, Madam Speaker, my primary concern in Nunakput.

After housing, the GNWT needs to rethink our mental health supports. We need to do more counselling available. Feet on the ground, people being hired from outside. Don't have to be government people employees. Empower our own people. Send them out for training to get them empowered to help our own. I think that's one of the best things I heard today in one of our meetings. It's always good to hear somebody from the outside but we still have to work together to try, you know, live together. It's not -- we live it every day, Madam Speaker. Any communities we live in.

When I go home, when I leave Yellowknife, we don't have Starbucks or KFC or no essential -- people call it essential. We have a Northern store, Stanton, we're happy with that and we make do. But at the end of the day, we have to provide service.

Like I said earlier today, our government gets \$35,000 per year per person, in the Northwest Territories, and not all of them are getting access to that and being served, you know. 130 litres of water a day; they don't get that, because Housing budgets because it's -- it's the local housing authority, you're -- they're budgeting so much because they get so much to provide service and there's only supposed to be so much in that unit but when you're overcrowded because you have nowhere else to go you're going to take them in. That has to be looked at. We have to really take a good hard look at what we're doing here. We need that hands-on approach for, you know, in our riding, our high rates of suicide. That has to be looked at, and I'm really happy to hear that there's places that our Ministers willing to work with to get our young youth help and bring people in to help us in our school and that. And so I'm really looking forward to that.

Madam Speaker, we need to make sure our residents have a house to live in and hope in their lives for a future.

My dad always said, you know, you have a roof overhead and you got food in the fridge and you're capable of working, we got it made. You know, we don't want much. But the housing units that we do have have to be liveable and have to, you know, be there -- we have to be there for the people -- we stand here in the House every time and we get, most of the time we don't get getting lip service. I always say lip service because it sounds good here on TV on the mikes but when it's time to get the work done, we have to really push. But now I know my Minister, the Ministers that I'm working with I know that they want change and I know that they want to do good. So we got 18 months I think left to try to do that, to represent, to get houses, elders facilities, private businesses to come up, and we have to work together for the betterment of the people and making sure that everybody's working together for the common good. And, you know, I just -- in conclusion,

Madam Speaker, just the biggest thing is working together, again. Can't say it loud enough. Work together, get it done. No more talking. We got the money there; spend it. And thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Replies to budget address. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 925-19(2): HOUSING PRIORITIES

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, can the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation provide me with some encouragement, and I'd rather hear a "yes", but that her department has a plan for the property previously known as the Disneyland in Hay River?

This land has been sitting vacant for several years and was, as I understand it, to be used for a multi-residential seniors use. And I'd like to see some type of commitment that, you know, at least she'll direct her department to start looking at, you know, a plan to do something with the property. Because if not, let's try and offload it on some private sector that may actually build some houses or build an apartment building. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the Member for the question. The Housing Corporation intends to use this property for future seniors housing development in Hay River.

I want to assure the Member that the Housing Corporation recognizes the importance of working with community leadership and many housing partners to support the seniors housing needs in your community. The Housing Corporation has taken seniors housing study to help inform future investment and is also in the process of completing a comprehensive technical assessment of the Riverview Lodge seniors complex to plan for its eventual replacement in the near future capital plan.

In addition, the Housing Corporation is working towards the development of a community housing plan in Hay River that will also inform the future housing investment in your community. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. And I appreciate the response from the

Minister. It just sounds like that it's a long ways down the road. And I hope that's not the case.

Madam Speaker, can the Minister tell me when will the apartment building known as the Hay River Singles be replaced with the new complex? It is aging. I know they do work to it but it's almost as old as me. Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Based on the current Housing Corporation's unit condition assessment, the corporation anticipates being able to operate this facility for at least another five years. When this facility approaches the end of service of life, the corporation will be considering including the replacement of this asset in a near future capital plan. And I want to assure the Member as well too that, you know, it seems like it's a long time, but also we have to strategically plan when we are replacing these units across the Northwest Territories, and I do realize we have such a huge aging infrastructure across the North. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. At 65 years old, I don't have much time left. So I want to see something done.

---Laughter

Madam Speaker, can the Minister please explain to this Assembly the process for her department to take over existing vacant federal government houses in Hay River, and throughout the NWT, and if this is something her department's being -- or has been looking at, and if so, what would the use of these buildings be? Thank you

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. And thank you to the Member for that question because we do have a number of federal units across the Northwest Territories that will become vacant and as a housing Minister, I am working with the federal government to acquire those units as well. But as per the federal government's asset disposition policy, notifications on available surplus federal housing units will continue to be issued in the interest group based on priority. This priority is circulated. First, goes to the Indigenous governments, then to the federal government departments, then to the territorial governments, and then finally municipalities informed on the process is available on the Government of Canada's website. Should there be no interest from the noted priority groups, the units will be listed on an open market for private sale. The Housing Corporation will continue to closely monitor availability of the federal housing units in the communities for possible use in our housing programs. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. And this final question she'll probably answer in a couple days from now, but can the Minister tell this Assembly how has the objectives and direction of the NWT Housing Corporation shifted over the past two and a half years? What changes have been made, and have those changes shown up in the communities? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I hope that my Minister's statement on the new mandate for the Housing Corporation as a part of the comprehensive renewal strategy helps to answer the Member's question.

The new mandate and the renewal strategy responds to many calls for change in how the corporation does business, including a motion from this Assembly from March of last year. While overall of giving more Northerners have access to urgently needed housing remains the same, our new mandate will make us more effective in getting there. We will be building on some success, including the unprecedented level of new housing deliver currently underway. The new mission, values, and vision will help the corporation to be more effective and to sustain these successes in the near future.

I just also wanted to highlight to the Member that this is the largest housing delivery that the Northwest Territories has seen in decades. And born and raised here in the Northwest Territories and still seeing the Webber units that we are still renting, we try to put those forward and ahead so we could plan for repairs for those units to extend the life of them.

To date, we are going to be receiving 90 units -- a 90-unit delivery throughout the Northwest Territories. And I know this is not going to solve our housing issue, but it's a great start for the Northwest Territories to be accessing these units and for the federal government to come and partner and work with us as well too. We wouldn't be able to deliver these units on our own with the budget that we currently do have. And I just want to thank the federal government for working with the Northwest Territories as we continue to lobby them and recognizing our housing crisis in the territories. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Great Slave.

QUESTION 926-19(2):
HOUSING

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would also like to ask questions of the Minister of Housing. In the government renewable strategy process that the Housing Corporation is undertaking, how is the government going to work with the private

sector to address the skyrocketing cost of housing in the North? Is there is a plan to diversify where those leases are held or to build new housing units? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The corporation fully complies with the GNWT's policy by utilizing in an open, fair, and transparent public request for proposal process when procuring its leased housing units. These public requests for proposal are open to potential landlords including development corporations and nonprofit organizations. And I just also want to include that since I've had the portfolio that we've strategized on how we are going to be looking at the housing delivery in the territories and I just want the Member to just express to her that I understand that, you know, there's a huge need looking at the leases in the territories but also looking at the limited availability that we have here in Yellowknife as well. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate that, but I mean if we have an open RFP process but there's only run landlord, it's pretty much guaranteed where it's going, so kind just a comment.

An issue we hear time and again as MLAs is the lack of land that is available for development in the North. So what is the department and the Minister doing to work with GNWT colleagues on getting that land transferred to the cities or the communities for development? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just to comment on the question asked previously that the Housing Corporation is interested in if there are additional landlords that out there besides Northview for the Yellowknife area, that I'm interested in having those conversations and really a description of what it is that they can offer the corporation and the territory as a whole. And also specifically to talk about the question in regards to land, I would have to get back to the Member because there is such levels of transfers that need to happen prior to a transaction such as that happening. So I have to get back to the Member. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yeah, that's fine; I do recognize that it's a complex situation. As I spoke to earlier in this session, constituents want to see social programming available on site in their building such was the model at YWCA's Rockhill House. So is the department working to identify spaces within existing leases and buildings to be used for integrated service delivery and social programming? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just want to highlight to the Member as well that I will be tabling the strategy for renewal for the Housing Corporation, and we've taken all of the comments that I've heard from the other side and lobbying for housing and to improve the housing programs throughout the Northwest Territories and that we are looking at the reviewing of programs and policies as well, too, and how I can work with my colleagues in delivering those programs to meet the needs of low income housing clients. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Final supplementary, Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will also be tabling a document today which has some commitments about availability of social programming for youth so I hope that the Minister will take a look at that.

My last question is that in my riding I have two vacant lots where apartment buildings once stood - Rockhill and Polaris. Both were lost to fire significantly reducing the available units within the city. Is there a plan to rebuild on the GNWT-owned Rockhill lot or to purchase the lot of the former Polaris building for social housing? Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thanks.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you to the Member for the question because I have the similar question in Hay River South as well, too, in looking at replacing units throughout the territory but also looking at vacant land. We don't have that budget set aside. We honestly have to forecast for those replacements. With the significant level of affordable housing projects occurring under the federal government programs, such as the National Co-Investment Fund Program, the Housing Corporation's current public housing delivery, its focus on smaller communities for this government. The corporation is currently updating its analysis on core need investment, needs for new existing stock, and the intent to share this information with all Members as soon as it's available. The corporation has continued to closely monitor the status of its properties in the city and will certainly be looking at replacement aging assets when they reach the end of their service and their life. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

QUESTION 927-19(2):
FORT SMITH HOUSING ISSUE

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, specifically, only one home was destroyed in my riding for the situation of my constituent. So that is why this case was handled differently. Does the Minister believe that any victim of a natural disaster whose home was destroyed should be treated the same regardless of the community they live in? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, I want to acknowledge that any situation causing the loss of someone's home and belongings is a tragic event. My heart goes out to those who have experienced their losses especially that I've seen during my term. During my term, I've seen a number of fires that have taken homes throughout the Northwest Territories and, you know, the corporation has tried to work with those clients in trying to help them to get them housed immediately.

In this case, where is a wild spread of a natural disaster, the assistance is offered through the disaster assistance policy through MACA. The incident that the Member refers to was deemed not to be widespread natural disaster and therefore that policy did not come into effect.

For the corporation, we are responsible for our units in these situations. So for an example, in Jean Marie, where four Housing Corporation owned-units were impacted, the corporation took responsibility for repairing and replacing those assets. Personal losses from the tenants in those homes would be dealt with by the disaster assistance policy and not by the corporation. For private homes, the primary relief available repair by typically do not replace private homes that are lost in natural or manmade disasters. Examples, House fires. But like I had said, that the corporation when we hear of these emergencies, the local housing authorities do reach out to the clients and do try to allocate them units as soon as possible and where we would avoid putting them on the waitlist. We would treat this as an emergency. And for somebody who had been on the waitlist for the past three, four, five years, six months, whatever, we would make sure that we address those emergencies accordingly. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Speaker, can the Minister tell us if the NWT Housing Corp considers natural disasters that destroys people's homes on a case-by-case basis, or is there a uniform approach from the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation in dealing with people's homes destroyed by natural disasters? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We don't have a policy that guides us into those type of emergencies in replacing private homes. We are responsible for our own assets where they're, you know, damaged by natural disasters. The corporation would try to replace those homes or else they would have to go on our next forecasted capital budget for those replacements. We have experienced where we have lost our own assets and we're not able to replace those units as soon as possible. But then I fully understand with the disaster assistance policy, it had to have been widespread and my apologies to the Member that we did the best that we can to address this issue and trying to find alternative solutions to work with the Member. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Speaker, can the Minister tell us if the NWT Housing Corp treats victims of natural disasters differently based on the type of disaster they were in or are all victims treated the same across the board? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Housing Corporation has been consistent with our approach to the homes lost through disasters. The corporation does not hold responsibility for the loss of private homes. It is only responsible for the loss of its own properties. But like I had mentioned before that we try to work with those clients and we try to find solutions for them. And to help them to get on to the waitlist, and we avoid that -- we make sure that there is a unit that possibly is vacant that possibly could be available to the individual but according to the policies we do have right now, we don't replace private homes. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Speaker, the Minister's previous answers to this situation always references the income threshold. My constituent would like to be treated fairly and receive a fair rental monthly fee for the unit he is now in. This type of policy is something I would like the Minister to investigate and think out of the box. Does the Minister believe that any NWT resident who is a victim to a natural disaster is deserving of compensation if their home is destroyed? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will follow up with the Member because this is a file that I've been working with and it's just really obvious who I'm speaking about so I would like to follow up with the Member separately. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

QUESTION 928-19(2):
HOUSING IN WHATI

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mahsi, Madam Speaker. Okay, Madam Speaker [Translation] Madam Speaker, this issue I am going to talk about is regarding the people of the Northwest Territories. It is them who wrote this statement. They don't have a lot of job and they don't make very much money. And beyond that, and the people from Housing Corporation, they still have these people's information, they have policies in place and it depends on your income whether you fall into the certain brackets. And they are not able to help them. They have policies like this in place and it's preventing people from being helped which is not right. In our eyes, we think that this is completely wrong. If they want to help the people in the community, they need to have a policy that helps people equally. And we know that there is a shortage of jobs in the community, and this policy needs to be reviewed. So if they want to help the people in the communities, they need to look at these old houses and some of these people still have old mortgages. We want them to write off these mortgages. So my first question is, Madam Speaker, is it right? Is it accurate? Is it right that some people are still living -- are still living in a rental with no running water? Is that right? That's my first question, if she thinks this is right for people to live like this. [Translation ends].

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. With the current policies that we do have, and I do hear the Member and I pulled the -- I've asked the corporation to provide me with a list of outstanding mortgages that we do have throughout the Northwest Territories. I have said to the corporation that I would like to deal with these files and try to close them up before the end of this government.

But what I have been able to discover was that we do have to follow the Financial Management Act when we are going to be writing off any of these bad debts coming forward, and it does go through a thorough process as well too. So I would have to follow up with the Member for those specific clients as well and I would like to get those further details. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mahsi. [Translation] I am happy I would say. My second questions would be [Translation ends] assets to ensure it is fair for both party.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Absolutely. Like I had said in my previous responses is that we are working with the 248

mortgage clients throughout the Northwest Territories and trying to strategize in how to work with those debts coming forward, and I would like to meet with the Member privately as well too so I can -- she can provide me a list of those constituents that would need to be addressed from the corporation. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mahsi. Would the government commit to an ombudsman for the Housing Corporation so people's concern can be reviewed and reported on an independent third party?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm not going to commit to that today. Madam Chair, I would like to meet with the Member privately and we can discuss those files going forward and those concerns and what we could work through and accomplish within the lifetime of this government. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mahsi, thank you, I'm looking forward to the meeting. So when is the Housing Corporation policy review going to be completed? Will the MLA and communities have a chance to comment on them? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We will be tabling the strategy for renewal for the corporation today, and we do have set timelines and I will be sharing that with standing committee and all MLAs. So I could provide them with a timeline and measure our progress going forward. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

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

QUESTION 929-19(2):
HOUSING

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today we'd like to just, you know, find a solution for housing in the community of Paulatuk. We're really in core -- dire need over there because we have been told today we have 29 on the waiting list. 29 applications. Madam Speaker, can the Minister commit to work with the community of Paulatuk for the housing solutions within the life of this Assembly, and that the 28 people that need a home in Paulatuk. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I really want to highlight the renewal that I will be tabling today, and it really opens up that dialogue to be working with the Indigenous groups

as well and looking at, you know, that we've lobbied the federal government so I know there's federal money coming to the Northwest Territories and in the responsibility for the corporation, I would like to work in partnership in addressing the housing needs at the community level. Today I can just confirm for the Member that he will be receiving four units in the community of Paulatuk, and I know that doesn't address the housing waitlist as he had mentioned of 29 but I will be working with the Member. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So Madam Speaker, with the funding that the Indigenous governments got, \$34 million into the NWT, how does it work in regards to getting them and holding them accountable for providing -- building units in our communities that need it, or do they just get to sit on the money and pop houses in regards to wherever they think they're needed and we're in dire need now. So how does this government hold the Indigenous governments accountable for housing monies from the federal government? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. And in respect, I would not -- as a housing Minister and part of the territorial government, I would not hold the Indigenous governments accountable in that way. I would like to approach engagement and partnership with the Indigenous groups and trying to find solutions at the ground level.

I'm not sure of the money that they have -- for the federal money that they would be receiving from the federal government. But as we go forward, I would like to work with the Indigenous groups and work on their priorities as well. But not only that, I would like to share the information that we have as a Housing Corporation and what we built in the smaller communities and how we can be working together strategically. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the co-investment fund is \$34.5 million. We have to hold our local Indigenous governments accountable. I'm Indigenous, and we need houses in our communities. We need them sooner than later. They already got the monies. They've been sitting on it for a bit. I've been trying to get in contact with my Inuvialuit Regional Development Corporation in regards to where they're at with units. Nothing. How do we hold them accountable, and how do we get houses and units on the ground for people that the money's intended for instead of sitting on it? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. With the federal funding that has been allocated to the Indigenous groups, the GNWT had

lobbied for more money for the Northwest Territories but also included in the messaging, that it doesn't have to go directly to the Government of the Northwest Territories, that we would support going to the local Indigenous groups. With the distribution that throughout the territory. I don't have that amount of information. I'm not a part of those conversations going forward between the Indigenous groups and the federal government and the further details that are required for that funding. But what I can say is that for the territories that we had acquired the 25.5 million through the National Co-Investment Fund in trying to address the housing needs throughout the Northwest Territories and through that we were able to provide 60 units throughout the Northwest Territories. But I just want to be very clear that we don't have any involvement with the federal money that's being allocated to the Indigenous groups. But the corporation is willing to be working in partnership in trying to help them deliver those units as well, too. Whatever they may decide. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: What is your point of order.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: For a Member to be asking a Minister from the GNWT to be accountable to federal money that is given to an Indigenous government or to an organization that the GNWT has no say over. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. There is no point of order. I think the Minister can take the question and answer it accordingly, and we'll move on. Final supplementary. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I just -- we just need to -- we're just short of houses in the communities, and money's been given. We got like, she said earlier, 34 million. 66 houses for the aboriginal governments and another 30 -- or 60 for our territorial government. A hundred twenty something units, Madam Speaker. We need units on the ground. We can't give lip service no more. We need a timeline to work forward to getting this done. And I'm just trying to hold people accountable. It's our job. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. I didn't hear any question in that so we'll move on. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 930-19(2):
HOUSING

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Speaker. I know in the mission statement that the Minister stated there, they used the word "innovation." And innovation is always trying something new and I hope it's just not putting new siding on a House, but. But I really am encouraged by that word and it speaks well to the wood pellet boiler systems that I

bring up. And it's not just a word exercise to me but it's to help the Minister and the department in realizing savings and overall there's savings to our bottom line and the budget which we can use elsewhere, Madam Speaker.

I've got the March 29, 2021, letter from the Minister response to my oral question on biomass heating and energy. And it states that the corporation is currently developing its own three-energy action plan. And it goes on to indicate the report will be out last spring. It would have been April-May 2021. Can the Minister update this House as to that report that should have been out in the spring of 2021? Mahsi.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would have to get back to the Member. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Speaker. And I believe they were saying that the report would have been another year or something in the making, but. Can the Minister update this House -- or I take that one back, Madam Speaker.

There is a proposed hydro transmission line to Fort Providence which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the local power plant. Has the department considered this option as electric heat for the rental units in the community? Mahsi.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would have to get back to the Member on that response. But I do want to say that we have had some environmental savings approaches as well through the Northwest Territories. We do have solar projects that were completed in Inuvik, Fort Simpson, Hay River, Fort Liard, and Whati. And also for the biomass, we just completed a biomass project here in Yellowknife, I want to say in June of this year, and it was for eight public housing units at Sissons Court. And we do have a biomass project that has been completed in Aklavik, Hay River -- or sorry, Aklavik, Fort Resolution, N'dilo, Dettah, and Behchoko. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Speaker. When contractors or others that provide rental units to the corporation or lease to rent unit, whether it is a single dwelling or an apartment complex, I note that the corporation does not stipulate any direction as to cost savings to the corporation. A lot of new ones where the market housing and also the ones to the RCMP. You know, for the provision of using biomass heating systems to these new units. And I'm just wondering if the Minister will develop a plan to include in the contract documents this provision in all upcoming new units. Mahsi.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I don't have that level of detail right in front of me. But as we are looking at the 90-unit delivery throughout the Northwest Territories, we did take into consideration energy efficiency and when constructing and delivering of those units. So I would have to follow up with the Member for those further details. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Speaker. My wood pellet boiler system always gets blown off by energy efficiencies type of thing where you're sealing a door or fixing a broken window. But to stimulate local economies in the small communities, will the Minister look at contracting out wood pellet boiler systems to local contractors or development corporations for the supply of wood pellet boiler system heat to NWT Housing Corporation units? Mahsi.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. And I like where the Member is going with this as well, too, and I didn't want to -- yes, I'm going to reference your wood pellet boiler system. And also I need to understand the need and demand, the supply throughout the Northwest Territories. I'm not familiar with that. If we were to move into looking at wood pellet boilers, I don't know what the supply is like in the Northwest Territories. So I'd have to get back to the Member in looking at what units would possibly be able -- that would be eligible for that type of transfer and also the operation and maintenance of that as well. And I'd have to follow up with the Member. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

QUESTION 931-19(2):
CO-INVESTMENT FUND

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. I'm just going to say to the Minister, I've got a wood pellet boiler in the House. I'd be happy to show her. But my questions are, again, for the same Minister, Minister responsible for the Housing Corp, and they're about the federal co-investment fund and the NWT carve out. Can the Minister confirm that the NWT carve out funding has now all been accessed and will result in 66 new housing units for small communities? Mahsi Madam Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, the co-investment \$60 million has been spent throughout the Northwest Territories. \$25.5 million of that funding was applied to by the Housing Corporation therefore we were able to deliver 60 units throughout the Northwest Territories.

And additionally, the 34.5 million was applied to and by Indigenous governments.

And with the previous announcements by the federal government, I just want to let the Member know that the recipients of the \$34.5 million throughout the territory, the Indigenous groups received were Deh Gah Got'ine Nation, Lutselk'e Dene Nation, Hamlet of Tulita, Yellowknife Dene Nation, and Fort Good Hope Dene, had accessed their \$34.5 million. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. I want to thank the Minister for that. Of course it's good news, but I wonder about the cost of these units. The average cost of the units appears to be about \$520,000. Can the Minister explain how this compares to previous new builds undertaken by the NWT Housing Corporation. Mahsi, Madam Speaker. And I gave a head's up to the Minister so she got these ahead of this afternoon's proceeding.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. What I had found with the delivery of these units, they are costing us significantly a lot more than expected and the Housing Corporation has to work very strategic in delivering these units as well and trying to meet the obligations and the intent of the federal government for distributing this federal funding.

The corporation tendering cost results depend on a range of factors such as building location, building designs, the method of construction, and whether these are going to either be stick built or modular. For the corporation's co-investment delivery involves bachelor and one-bedroom units configuring either into four-plexes or duplexes for added cost savings.

With the 60 construction unit delivery primarily modular construction, 520,000 per unit cost has referenced in the corporation's total project budget including the design, site development, and logistics.

As with other in the construction industry, the corporation is observing price escalations in its delivery due to the impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic and also the availability of materials to be delivered to the territories as well. Those prices have drastically increased. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. I want to thank the Minister for that. I was hoping to kind of get an understanding of how these new costs compared to previous new builds, but I want to move on.

As the Minister and this House knows housing is certainly one of my own top priorities and we need to close the gap in terms of core housing need. Can the Minister confirm that the 60 units under the NWT carve out for the Housing Corporation will become part of their inventory and how will this affect

operation and maintenance requirement and costs? Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, this will be adding new stock to our current public housing units on the ground level. The corporation is anticipating being able to deliver these units, new public housing units for the list of communities. I'm pleased to advise that the corporation has received an initial funding allocation in 2022-2023 for the GNWT for the incremental ongoing operation and maintenance funding required associated with this delivery, and this included -- this will be included in the 2022-2023 main estimates. This funding for the additional units will begin in the delivery year of 2022-2023. That fiscal year is when these units should be constructed and people should be living in them. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. I want to thank the Minister for that and, of course, probably have a few more questions this afternoon about where it's found in the main estimates. But it's not clear what the long-term plan is for the financing of the Housing Corporation, whether its governance model needs adjusting. Can the Minister briefly discuss the lessons learned from the NWT Co-Investment Fund carve out? Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The corporation is currently undergoing the renewal. This will help us inform the annual and long-term business planning of the corporation and the governance element for the renewal conversations. Improved engagement with Indigenous groups, effective partnership capacity of stakeholders to apply for the secure federal funding and continue to work with Canada in partnership to seek innovation and flexibility and financing arrangements will also inform the renewal outcomes.

But looking at the long-term plans for the corporation, I will have to follow up with the Member as well, that, you know, we're just trying to get through this construction season right now. We are wanting to deliver these units on time. But that doesn't stop the corporation from going forward and accessing and lobbying for further funding coming forward. One of the things that the corporation is wanting to do now is address seniors housing in smaller communities as well, too, so we're having those conversations with the federal government on what type of programming that we should be applying for because we haven't received any further direct funding but except for the -- I think it was \$25 million that we had received in the spring and those

units are now just rolling out this year of 2022. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 932-19(2):
HOUSING

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I recently saw that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation purchased the 24-unit Nordic Arms from Yellowknife School District 1. I was just hoping the Minister could update the House on what the plan for Nordic Arms is both in regards to its existing tenants and likely the transfer of it to public housing. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. And I just wanted to talk about the Nordic Arms, that that was a huge opportunity for the corporation and also to try to relieve the leases that we do hold with Northview and trying to address that. And I've heard the conversation and the statements coming from the MLAs. So looking at this opportunity was something that we had applied for. There was, yeah, I think ten other submissions besides the corporation. So I was happy that we were able to win that contract bid.

But looking at the programs and services that would be offered through that initiative, right now we're looking at the transfer, looking at the waitlist that we do have, looking at the waitlist, the transfer list, and also we do have tenants that are wanting to get out of their current leases right now and their current location. So we're just working with the tenants. We're coming up with a plan. But, you know, I could follow up with the Members on what that transition is going to be looking like because the other is that I want to address seniors housing as well too. I know I'm taking a little bit of time, but I just -- it's such important information that I would need time to put this together and being able to provide that information to the MLAs. But, and also addressing the programming and the seniors as well too in Yellowknife. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I believe the Minister has somewhat alluded to it there. You know, I know the housing waitlist in Yellowknife is hundreds of people long. But I'm just curious whether the plan is, since we brought 24 new units into the portfolio, is this in addition to the Yellowknife housing total amount of units or will we then correspondingly lower the number of units we lease by 24? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Like I had said, I have to bring this back to the department in looking at our plan going forward because we do have to work with the waitlist that's there as well, too, but also addressing the trying to get out of those 24 Northview leases as well. So like I had said, I have to come back to the Member as well but there's a lot of planning that the corporation is doing right now for the transfer going forward. But I would like to see the leases with Northview cancelled. If I'm able to look at the 24 leases, at least that is a start. And I think to date we have 164 leases, if I'm correct, with Northview, and I did ask the corporation if they can price out what would it cost this government to construct 164 apartment building complex, and I haven't received that number yet. But I would like to have the opportunity to provide that information to the Member. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the Minister having that conversation because, as I've mentioned many times, there's about \$20 million in office space leasing that the GNWT has. There's another 700 or so units that income assistance essentially pays the lease for people. And then there's the other \$3 million that the Housing Corp then leases. And I'm wondering if the Housing Corp has ever looked into offering a long-term lease to either a nonprofit or a dev corp so that they could use that money to probably leverage some more federal funding or, you know, leverage a mortgage or go build something or use it as O and M. I really believe that there is a potential to be using this over \$30 million in leasing money much more effectively with the help of our dev corps and non-profits. Is that something the Housing Corp has ever done or is willing to do? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just want to inform the Member as well, too, that the Housing Corporation has been approached by private industry as well too and looking at possible leases, how does this work, what type of clients do we have, and also the operation and maintenance of what it is like to hold these contracts with us. So I am open to meeting with the development corporations if this is something that they would like -- that they are interested in. And if we are able to look at entering into a separate lease agreement with another -- with private industry and alleviate more leases out of Northview, I'm willing to take a look at that and I'm willing to understand and see what else is out there here in Yellowknife. But just too, for the Member, I have had conversations with those -- with private industry as well too but they haven't really gotten anywhere. It is quite a huge responsibility to be delivering public housing and with a lot of situations that come with it as well too. So I just open that conversation with the Member as

well too, if you'd like to follow up. And if there is interested Members, that I would like to at least have that conversation with whoever he's referring to. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I guess, you know, I find the leasing conversation interesting but, really, at the end of the day I think the solution is we simply need to build more public housing. Every time we build public housing, we actually free up units that we are currently renting. And there's just no doubt the GNWT is the single biggest driver of rent in Yellowknife, both through the number of workers it locates in Yellowknife and the amount it actually pays these companies. So every time we build more public housing, we fix and increase the vacancy rate, which is getting more and more pressure these days in the rental market. So my question for the Minister of the NWT Housing Corp is, considering those hundreds of people on the waitlist, is there any plans in the Housing Corp's capital budget to build more public housing in Yellowknife? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Speaker. With the significant levels of affordable housing projects occurring under the federal government programs, the co-investment fund program for one, the Housing Corporation's current public housing delivery is focused on smaller communities. The corporation is currently updating its analysis in core need investment need for new existing stock and the intent to share the information with all of the Members as soon as it is available in late March.

And also I just want to express that, you know, we haven't scheduled to be building any new complexes here in Yellowknife but we do have the Canada housing benefit that is available to the larger areas as well that does subsidize the market rental that is out there. So there is a bit more programming that is available to Yellowknife to alleviate those high costs of living here. And that's just one area of how we're addressing that. But the corporation is continuing -- it is continuing to closely monitor the status of its own properties in the city, and we'll certainly be looking at replace aging assets when they reach the end of life of service. These future public housing replacements could take a form of new buildings as possible, of existing buildings where appropriate. But I also do want to recognize that I have been asked the question of the new builds in Hay River and also in -- and looking at what we do have in the smaller communities and in the larger communities that do need to be replaced, and I do understand where the Member's coming from, but we do have significant programming to address those needs. And as of

right now, we don't have any scheduled new builds for Yellowknife. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

QUESTION 933-19(2):
HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, my first question actually relates to what the Member for Yellowknife North was talking about, and that's the opportunity to enter into long-term leases with different organizations, different renters, and potentially opening up doors to innovative agreements with the NWT Housing Corporation. So I'm wondering if the Housing Corporation has a policy that leads the way for long-term leases to happen between the Housing Corporation and either Indigenous governments or NGOs in our communities. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. You know, this really strikes a lot of work that is being done already with the renewal. And I'd have to get back to the Member as well, too, and just for that updated information and really looking at where we are as a corporation and looking at those leases as well. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, two years ago when I first asked about long-term lease agreements and the policies that went with them, I also asked about policies that lead the way for partnership agreements between the NWT Housing Corporation and Indigenous governments and NGOs. There's a lot of different ways that this can happen. It doesn't have to simply be between lease agreements. It can be where Indigenous governments or NGOs actually are able to easier get the government -- or sorry, money through the federal government, build a building, and then the NWT Housing Corporation can then take on the responsibility of operating the government. So there's different types of partnership agreements that can happen. And so I'm wonder if the policy work exists with the NWT Housing Corporation to lead those types of policy agreements so that they're accessible for organizations that want to get involved. Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We are currently working with the Council of Leaders specifically developed for addressing housing throughout the Northwest Territories. We also have a working table with the federal government as well too that has been established. But looking at these opportunities going forward, it's

quite interesting where we are going. And just like I had said that I would like to have the opportunity to really look at the renewal and looking at that strategy going forward because we will be reviewing those policies. But I don't have a timeline for that in front of me right now, but I can provide that to the Members. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, when we first sat in this House through our very first budget cycle, at that time the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation identified that our way forward was through partnership. And so I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to how many partnership agreements have been signed with Indigenous governments or NGOs in the life of this Assembly. Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Looking at those partnerships is something that I pride on within this portfolio, and when we had the housing delivery of the 90 units I made sure that we acknowledge what the -- was coming from the smaller communities, was they wanted an opportunity to be working and partnering with the Housing Corporation. I don't have that number in front of me, but I could tell you that it's quite significant, and it's growing and, you know, the purpose of that too as well is creating employment in smaller communities but also building the capacity. And, you know, we're always going to be needing housing. We're always going to be needing the repairs. And also looking at further investment, we've had our community housing initiative that we're looking at, whether the community is identifying replacing pilings for private homeowners, whether they're looking at furnaces as well too. And, like, I can't -- I don't have all of those list of projects at the top of my head but I can provide that to the Member, that it's quite significant through the territory. And also working with the nonprofit organizations as well too, to program deliver on behalf of us, so that avoids the applications coming forward. But this is all initiated by smaller communities and interested nonprofit organizations as well too. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, this week we heard from the Member from Nunakput -- or in an exchange between the Member for Nunakput and the Health Minister that Tuktoyaktuk was unable to hire a community health counsellor because they didn't have available housing. And so I'm wondering what type of action this spurs from the NWT Housing Corporation or what type of agreements -- sorry, what type of partnership conversations happen at the level of the Housing Corporation in response to understanding how lack of housing has an impact on

access to mental health counsellors in communities? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is a question that was brought up as well, too, like the Member had said, but we have such a significant need throughout the Northwest Territories, let it be homelessness to homeownership to home repair to government employees wanting to work in smaller communities and providing these services. I have been asked as well, too, by my Cabinet colleagues to provide an analysis of what is required in the smaller communities as well and looking at whatever programs that we do have. My riding is quite small as well, too. We need probation officers. We need social workers, healthcare professionals, teachers, and it is a struggle to house them when they're wanting to come up to the North. But not only that, during my first -- and I think it was in 2020, I met with the NWT Teachers' Association and they had brought this up as well too, is that they would like to see teachers stay longer in smaller communities and it has been brought up that nurses would like to stay longer in smaller communities and really commit to providing those services. But housing is an issue right across the board, and the corporation is trying to work very strategically to offer those housing solutions and to be working with all departments, with all NGOs, with the smaller communities to address the housing need. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. The time has ended for oral questions. Oral questions. Written questions. Member for Yellowknife North

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 34-19(2): MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE GAP

MR. JOHNSON: Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Everyone has acknowledged that there is a municipal infrastructure gap, however, the most recent numbers on the size of that gap which provide a community breakdown versus the formula that are publicly available are from 2014. My question therefore is, can the Minister provide an updated analysis of the municipal infrastructure gap and the year it was completed based on:

1. What is the current municipal infrastructure gap by community;

2. What is the current municipal infrastructure gap by community as it relates to operations and maintenance funding;
3. What is the current municipal infrastructure gap by community as it applies to water and sewer funding, or as it is now called, environmental funding; and
4. What is the current municipal infrastructure gap by community as it applies to capital funding, or as it is now called, CPI and Gas Tax? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Written questions. Member for Monfwi.

WRITTEN QUESTION 35-19(2): NWT HEALTH STATUS CHARTBOOK

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is regarding the NWT Health Status Chartbook.

Madam Speaker, in the fall of 2019, the government released the NWT Health Status Chartbook to provide a broad overview of the health status of the Northwest Territories population. As I noted in my Member's statement yesterday, the broad overview painted was not good. It has now been more than two years since the report was published. Can the Minister explain what steps have been taken to specifically address the poor health behaviours revealed in the report?

So this is to the Minister of Health and Social Services. So,

1. Is the Minister working with Indigenous governments, organizations, and the relevant health and social services authorities to specifically improve the health indicators documented in the report;
2. Can the Minister identify any successes that have been achieved in improving health outcomes as a result of collaboration with Indigenous government, organizations, and the relevant health and social services authorities;
3. Can the Minister indicate when the NWT Health Status Chartbook will next be updated;
4. Can the Minister advise what specific initiatives are being undertaken in each regions of the Northwest Territories to address the poor health outcomes document in the report?

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of

committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Minister for Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 570-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING
CORPORATION MISSION, VALUES AND VISION

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Madam Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Mission, Values, and Vision. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. Minister for Justice.

TABLED DOCUMENT 571-19(2):
31ST ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020 VICTIMS
ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 572-19(2):
32ND ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021 VICTIMS
ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Madam Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: 31st Annual Report 2019-2020 Victims Assistance Committee of the NWT; and 32nd Annual Report 2020-2021 Victims Assistance Committee of the NWT. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. Member for Great Slave.

TABLED DOCUMENT 573-19(2):
MIND AND SPIRIT: PROMOTING MENTAL
HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS RECOVERY IN THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – CHILD AND
YOUTH MENTAL WELLNESS ACTION PLAN
2017-2022

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I wish to table a document entitled "Mind and Spirit: Promoting Mental Health and Addictions Recovery in the Northwest Territories - Child and Youth Mental Wellness Action plan 2017 - 2022". Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Madam Speaker, I wish to table a collection of photos of a home in Whati. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Member for Frame Lake.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 49-19(2):
REFERRAL OF MINISTER'S STATEMENT 202-
19(2) AND TABLED DOCUMENT 567-19(2) TO
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Madame la Presidente. I give notice that on Monday, February 28th, 2022, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that the Minister's statement 292-19(2): Annual Status Report on the Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories 2019-2023; and Tabled Document 567-19(2): Annual Status Report - 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, February 2021-January 2022, be referred to Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Notices of motion. Motions. Notice of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole on bills and other matters. Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act; Bill 29, Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act; Bill 38, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act 2021; Tabled Document 561-19(2): 2022-2023 Main Estimates, with Member from Deh Cho in the chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. We will take a short recess and resume with ENR. Mahsi.

---SHORT RECESS

Consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Committee would like to consider Tabled Document 561-19(2): Main estimates 2022-2023, with Environment and Natural Resources and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. We will take a short recess and resume with ENR. Take a break. Mahsi.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): I call the meeting to order. We are still dealing with ENR. I'll ask the Minister if he's got any witnesses to bring into the House.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Sergeant-at-Arms, can you please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Mahsi.

Would the Minister please introduce his witnesses. Mahsi.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, on the far right is deputy minister Erin Kelly and closest to me is Jessica St. Arnaud, the director of finance. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Committee, we were finished forest management yesterday. So today we're starting with water management and monitoring beginning on page 87, with information item on page 90. And I open it up for questions. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So this is the section of the ENR budget where transboundary waters matters are found, and I just have one question, to start with, about page 89. There's these contributions. It shows transboundary waters as a line item there back in 2020-2021. It was \$414,000, and now it's being proposed at 185. Can I just get an explanation as to what happened in that previous year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The amounts are dependent on the work that's being done at that time. So in 2021, there were research partnerships with academic institutions, more of them, that were supporting transboundary agreement implementation versus contracts with consultants. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, okay, thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks for that information. I'd mentioned the last couple of days one of the big areas of concern for

myself and I'm hearing from others is this proposed tailings, oil sands or tar sands tailings discharge regulations development, and I understand that we've wanted to try to get some better engagement and involvement with oil sands monitoring. There's a body called the oil sands monitoring program oversight committee, and then there's some technical advisory committees that I guess work with that committee as well. And as I understand it, we had -- GNWT wanted to get some involvement in that committee so that we could perhaps even get better prepared for potential discharges. So I'd like to ask the Minister whether he has indeed written to the Government of Alberta requesting membership on these committees and what the response has been from the provincial government. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Member for this question. Yeah, we did write a letter to Minister Nickerson, I believe is correct. And then just recently I received a response from Minister Nickerson that Alberta is not supportive of providing a seat to the GNWT on the oil sands monitoring program oversight committee and the technical advisory committee. We are very disappointed that Alberta is not supporting our request as this committee has made decisions about monitoring at sites identified in Alberta-NWT bilateral water management agreement. Minister Nickerson has made commitments in his response to our request to increase senior level communications, scheduled more frequent meetings, and updates between the Government of Alberta and the NWT. He also advised Alberta's commitment to share information to address the GNWT concerns and interests related to the oil sands development in their proposal to develop regulations that allow for release of that treated tailing water to the Athabasca River. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the Minister for that. Let's just say I'm a little bit more than surprised that the provincial government would deny a request to sit on this committee. This is, I guess, one of the committees too that had some oversight on the monitoring upstream that Alberta unilaterally decided to stop as part of its industry relief around COVID. So what reasons were provided by the provincial government to deny membership or not support GNWT's membership on this committee? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thanks. For that detail, I'll ask the deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The position of Alberta is that that monitoring committee is for the companies, the oil sands companies, the Indigenous governments, the Government of Alberta, and the Government of Canada, and that they have a responsibility to us through the transboundary agreement and they'd like to continue and enhance the relationship that we have through the transboundary agreement rather than have us be sitting on that particular board -- body, pardon me. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Mr. Chair, and I thank the deputy minister for that. Well, with all due respect, how can you part of a transboundary agreement when the provincial government upstream won't even share information; won't even allow you to be at the table when monitoring is being discussed? This is totally unacceptable. I would like to know from the Minister what the position of the federal government is on our request to sit on this committee?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So we have written a letter to the federal minister but we haven't received a formal response from Canada on our request and we continue to engage with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada on our request as both the Government of Canada and Alberta co-chair the oil sands monitoring program oversight committee. So we have been reaching out to Minister Gibeault on this very topic. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the Minister for that. I guess I'd like to seek a commitment from the Minister that he's going to provide an update in this House before the end of this sitting as to what's going on with this matter. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What I will do is I'll make a commitment to have a confidential update to committee and then we, as collectively [Audio Unavailable] a conversation moving forward what we will be doing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. While I appreciate the opportunity to get a technical update but I'm going to be asking the Minister questions before the end of this sitting on this matter because the public deserves to know whether the provincial government is going to allow us to sit on this committee or not. So that's a heads up to the Minister that I'm going to be asking for answers in public about this.

I want to move on, though, to a couple of other areas here if I can, Mr. Chair.

I believe this is the part of the ENR budget where inspections for water licenses are conducted, and if I've got that wrong maybe the Minister can let me know. But how have we done with frequency of inspections, particularly of the diamond mines for the water licenses, during the COVID pandemic? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. My understanding is we're still doing our inspections but for further detail and making sure I understand it correctly, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The water license inspections are completed by lands officers at the diamond mines as they're going there to do their lands inspections.

With respect to inspections across the board, ENR is always working with water resource officers to improve on inspections and on the timeliness on getting them to the boards. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

[Audio Unavailable]

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yeah, so as the Minister for Lands, I can verify that we do have our Lands officers going in doing the inspections presently. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the Minister for that. I'll probably have some more questions when we get to the Department of Lands

on this on the exact frequency so that's more of a heads up, but that's all I got on water today. And I want to thank the Minister and his staff and yourself.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's my understanding that EIA is currently leading some work to lobby the feds to amend the MVRMA or possibly devolve the MVRMA and pending the outcome of those negotiations, that would then allow ENR to resume work on the Waters Act and Environmental Protection Act. Can I just clarify if that is the case, that we have to wait for that MVRMA work to be done before any further work on waters or environmental protection? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I really hate giving these -- this answer to the Member but, yes, you are correct.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I recognize that MVRMA is both federal legislation and led by EIA but I'm just -- I think we are long overdue for a regulatory system overhaul and a big part of that is waters and EPA and obviously MVRMA. But does the Minister have any update on when the MVRMA work will be complete so we could then continue to finish the EPA and waters work? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thanks. I can't speak for another department but I can tell you from our side of things -- well, I can't tell you. I'll ask the deputy minister to update you on where we are. I don't think the Member wants me to say "soon". So I will turn to the deputy minister with your permission. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't think we have an exact date at this time but -- and I think that would be a good question for EIA but I will comment here that part of the reason that that decision was made is because of Indigenous capacity to take part in all of these initiatives.

In the background, while this work is going on, there is still work on the Waters Act and EPA being done so when we're able to move forward, we'll have the materials and items ready to go. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I'm happy to hear that, and I'm sure I'll have questions for EIA when the time comes.

I guess my other question is there's been some rumors or possibly talk of some sort of corporate restructuring involving some possibly ENR, MACA or Lands. One of the things that I don't quite understand is that Lands officers and water resource officers are two different positions. I think they are very ripe to become one position - environmental officers. I'll note that Lands officers already do water inspections at the diamond mines. So can I just get the Minister to speak to whether that merging of those positions is something that's being considered? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yeah, so I just want to clarify that, you know, we're talking amalgamation -- or the Member is talking about it. We're not talking about that right now. We're not talking about positions. We're not having that conversation. But my understanding is that there's two distinct positions and you need those two distinct positions. But for further detail and clarity on this, I would like you to turn to the deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The water resource officers are enabled under the Waters Act and the lands officers under the Lands Act. The Lands Act is with the Department of Lands. The Waters Act is with the Department of ENR. But so are the renewable resource officers the environmental protection officers, the forest officers etcetera. There are quite a few officer positions that are out there and at ENR there's a lot of cross-appointment amongst those officer and as you have already heard today, there's some cross-appointment with water resource officers and lands officers for efficiencies sake when dealing with the diamond mines. So when it makes sense, those positions do the work of others and -- pardon me. When it makes sense, those -- they're cross-appointed is what I meant to say. But in general, that's the way that the split has occurred. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Are there any other questions from committee on this section? Mr. Simpson.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess I'd just like to talk about the release of treated oil sand tailings in Alberta. And I guess it's difficult for

me to wrap my head around the fact that we don't hear much from the government's side on this. We hear Indigenous organizations, you know, opposing it. You know, we're downstream from it. We have claims out there that have, you know, sections about water rights and management. They have sections in there about the right to fish and wildlife.

And so I would ask the Minister if his department is collaborating or working with the Indigenous governments to deal with this issue because it sounds like we don't have a lot of clout when it comes to what's happening in Alberta and, you know, I just want to make sure we're using every avenue we can and, you know, we've got settled claims that are in, you know, entrenched in the constitution, you know, and they've got sections in there that we could use. So I just want to make sure, you know, that we are doing everything we can to protect the water and wildlife in the Northwest Territories. And, you know -- so I guess the question is, what are we doing? Are we working with Indigenous groups? Are we using the claims, the sections in the claims? So a couple questions there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Simpson. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Okay, thank you. I want to be very clear to the House, and to the people that are listening here, no release of oil sand process water is currently allowed under the Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act or the federal Fisheries Act, so it's not allowed. It's not allowed.

When you talk about what we're doing, I'm not in -- as I said previously, I'm not in there to make it public out there, slamming. We're trying to work behind the scenes, do the work we need to do, and we do have a relationship with our Indigenous governments. But for that detail of exactly, we've already had one meeting on water. We were planning on another one. Again, COVID hit. But for further detail on exactly what we're doing in moving forward thing, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I'll start with the fact that it's the studies that are being done now at this point to be able to enable potential regulations so we need to review the materials that are coming out of those studies to be able to engage on what they mean, because we don't have all of that information yet at this time. But what we do have is a system where we do engage with not just Indigenous governments but also other water partners.

How it works is that we have an Indigenous steering committee that has members from Indigenous governments across the Northwest Territories. And one of them is on the bilateral management committee with the GNWT for the Alberta agreement, for the BC agreement, etcetera. So there's a link back to that. And there's also a committee called the Mackenzie River Basin Board where there's an Indigenous member as well so they go to those meetings and they come back to the Indigenous steering committee and work together that way.

Then we have an annual meeting of water partners, so that includes anyone with interest in water where this matter has come up. You know, it's definitely of interest and we've heard about it the whole time we were developing the water strategy and the action plan.

And I think it's important to note that the Minister has provided briefings and responded to concerns from the Dene Nation as well as from the Council of Leaders within the last year on this matter as well. So there's quite a lot of communication that is occurring.

The claims are reflected in the agreements because we couldn't have made an agreement with Alberta that didn't and, of course, we wanted to uphold what's in the claims and those agreements. So there is recognition of substantially unaltered quality, quantity, and rate of flow which is in the claims. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. Simpson.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, we have these -- I understand we have these agreements. And you know, we have the claims agreements as well. Yet, you know, I look at, you know, case law, you know throughout Canada and throughout the US and, you know, there's been issues that have arisen. So I just want to make sure, you know, your department and this government is prepared, you know, to ensure that water flowing into the Northwest Territories is protected and do everything we can, whether it's through agreements, through the claims, it's through the courts, whatever we have to do, and we have to be prepared, you know, at some point to, you know, possibly, you know, go that route. Because, you know, water's going to be a -- you know, it's a commodity that everybody needs and it wouldn't take much to, you know, to destroy the habitat here in the Northwest Territories if we get contaminants coming down. You know, we talk about fish and other wildlife as well. So I just want to make sure that, you know, it's front and center and we're using everything we can. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Simpson. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Front, centre, back, side, overtop, underneath - it is very much a priority of this department, this government. I can guarantee you there's been lots of conversations and the department is working very diligently with our Indigenous governments and with the Alberta government and the federal government to make sure that these transboundary water agreements are enforced and work properly. There is mechanisms in there on how we -- where we go. And at some point in time, if we have to go there then we go there. But right now we are doing everything that we can and I have to say the department, starting from the deputy minister all the way down to our water inspectors out there, they're doing their job. They are doing good work in making sure that everything's being addressed. But I couldn't agree with you more and I couldn't agree with Mr. O'Reilly any more. These things need to be addressed. Sometimes in government we're a little bit -- not at the speed that people want but we're trying to do it appropriately and respectfully but also for the residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Simpson.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a word of caution I guess, is that when you use the word such as "guarantee" unless you've got 100 percent control over what's happening, don't use it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Simpson. Any comments, Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I guarantee that I'll listen to him on that one. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Simpson? I don't see any further questions from committee. Mr. Edjericon.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yeah, I think this is a -- be a discussion on this one here. I just wanted to let you know that I was also involved at the Mackenzie Valley Impact Review Board as a chairman for six years and we also were really concerned about the water and transboundary. So we also made arrangements to work with the Alberta government on the transboundary agreement to share information. And that information, to me, was really important because we kind of -- the mandate, the review board at the time was making sure that we protect the wildlife, the air, and the fish.

And I guess the other thing I was going to say is that you look at Giant Mine. You know, there's a huge cleanup that happened there. And that was probably one of the toughest EAs I've ever been through. And

at the end, we made a decision that's based on the evidence and the people that was all involved. The GNWT was there. Also proponents with the federal Government of Canada etcetera. So, and I'm glad the Minister talked about the agreements they have with Alberta government now and sharing information and so on.

And it's still -- you know, when I go back to my constituency and I listen to the elders and I listen to Chief Gerry Cheezie from Alberta, they still have issues and concerns about water and downstream users etcetera. And I'm not really sure how far your agreement goes in terms of the water license for the proponents in Alberta. And, like here in the North, we have a process that deals with those water license, you know, Ekati and Diavik etcetera, and we could make sure that, you know, the environment's going to continue to be protected etcetera.

Also up here with the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, the way we do business now is they start put security in so that mining companies don't end up like Giant Mine.

So I guess the question for me is that in Alberta, I'm not sure how far your water license or your agreement goes but how do we get involved if projects continues to happen. I know the oil prices are down. There's -- in places in Alberta where, you know, the refinery, you know, I heard a bunch of stories about not very good oil, they call it dirty oil and that kind of thing. But what I'm thinking, Mr. Chairman, is that how do we get involved to make sure that we don't have another Giant Mine and making sure the water's protected?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Edjericon. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I'll start and then I'll turn to the deputy minister. We don't want another Giant Mine. However, we can't tell other jurisdictions how they monitor or how they allow development. It would not be good if we are -- if you look at it, if we have Nunavut telling us what we can and can't do. We need to work with our organizations and we do address issues that way, but as for the how our water management is done and if I misspoke I will turn to the deputy minister to clear up everything and answer the other part of the question on how this transboundary agreement works. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So we don't get to make the decisions about development in another jurisdiction but we do get to provide input into those decisions, and there's lots of ways that we can do that. So at the first level, we have a transboundary agreement and there's notification clauses in that

agreement so we understand and know what development's going to happen. And there's monitoring in that agreement as well. So we get information from Alberta on the monitoring in Alberta so we have an early warning system with respect to water quality and quantity as things are coming towards the border.

We also work together with Alberta to do extensive monitoring at the border. So we have fish monitoring, bug monitoring, water monitoring, quality and quantity, to be watching at the borders to see if there's any changes that are happening. And some of that is community-based monitoring which involves communities and Indigenous governments in that monitoring. Other is monitoring with some of the academics and scientists from different places that come and help to support us in that work.

We have scientists at ENR; as well we engage experts from outside ENR to review the documents that we do get if we need particular expertise that we don't have. So some of the data gaps that they're looking into right now, the information they provide to us, we will be reviewing it and we'll have experts review it as well.

The agreement itself does not stop us from being able to intervene in a project. So we have gone and provided comments on Suncor, most recently, as well as some in BC that we've done previously. And the agreement doesn't stop us from having legal mechanisms available to us should the agreement not be able to -- if we're not able to get to where we need to be in that case.

So there's lots of ways that this could ultimately work out and our preferred way is to work with Alberta to get the information and collaborate on the monitoring and make sure that we're getting the information we need from the monitoring south of the border and analyze that and work with Indigenous governments, as I mentioned in my previous answer, you know, through all of those committees, to put forward our perspective and make sure that it's very clear what the residents of the Northwest Territories' interests are with all of these transboundary matters that are before us. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. Edjericon.

MR. EDJERICON: Just one more I think. I'm just thinking about the -- on the Giant Mine public hearing, we had many intervenors or proponents etcetera, like DFO, department of the environment, and all the aboriginal groups, etcetera. So if you were to find in your reports and fish studies etcetera, or water quality, you have an opportunity to probably work with the Alberta government and try to I guess address those issues. But also my question would be is that during the water licence process, are we

involved in that process too as well through your department and Alberta? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Edjericon. Minister.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So there are opportunities through environmental assessment and other licensing for us to provide comments to that, and we do take that opportunity when required. There's also the bilateral management committee with Alberta and the Northwest Territories that has an Indigenous Member on it where we can talk about these matters as well. So we have multiple ways to bring forward concerns related to upstream development. But that's an Alberta licensing process when it's something that's in Alberta. So it would be, you know, providing input through those two ways that I mentioned but we're not part of that licensing process specifically. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. And I don't think there's any further questions? Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I apologize ahead of time if this was already asked because I was off doing a meeting, so.

I'm just curious, I notice that the department has in the last while, or in 2020, released sort of a template now for reporting water quality sampling results etcetera in the Northwest Territories. And I'm just wondering where the department is at for -- for groundwater guidelines or for our own water and soil guidelines in the North versus using, say, federal guidelines. Are we continuing to develop, or are we still just using interim guidelines in the meantime? Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Nokleby. Minister.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So we have our own remediation guidelines and some of them are from different jurisdictions because we can use what's already been done in other places, and some of them are specific to the Northwest Territories. And right now, we're reviewing arsenic guideline, for example, because there's some circumstances in the Northwest Territories that mean that we need to

look at that from a specific NWT perspective. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I guess -- sorry, just one sec here. So under the -- in the grants contributions transfer, the water regulatory line there, is that just sort of a status quo amount, so that's not that they're -- like, you're not developing new ones, that money's not going to new development; it's more just for the application of the regulatory guidelines? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Nokleby. Minister.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the water regulatory is for review of projects, not for guidelines. So this is when we have some of the projects happening and we need to get some support through grants and contributions for review of those projects for expertise. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And is that a number that's generally, like, a static throughout the time, or do we expect fluctuations based on additional projects coming online? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Nokleby. Minister.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So it depends on the projects that come up that year and whether we have the expertise in house to address them or whether we need to work with others, whether they're academics or other experts, to be able to get the information we need to make sure that we're reviewing the projects properly. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to -- not very often I go on defence of a Minister in a department but I want to ensure that the -- when I

was Chief at Salt River First Nation, we always had a dialogue with ENR and with the water quality regulations and the monitoring that was done within the department. And I know for a fact that even during the pandemic that water quality was happening and monitoring, and the First Nations were always involved, especially Salt River and the Metis because they're from Fort Smith. And I know for a fact that the water quality in the Fort Smith area is top notch. So I just want to make sure that we don't get wrong information from anyone that this is not okay, okay? Because I think that they also have workings with the municipality, and I remember when my husband was mayor that there was a letter written about the water quality in Fort Smith and how great it was. Okay, so it's just a comment. I'm not going to ask any questions but I just want to know one thing, and I'm sure you're still working with those First Nations when they go out to do monitoring; am I correct? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Martselos. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, we're -- and I thank the Member for that. Yeah, we are working with them. We are -- we have constant communication, whether it's our regional office or out of headquarters, and we have an open line. So if the community had -- or Indigenous governments or the communities have concerns, they can reach out to us and we're able to get that information to them as quickly as we can. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: I want to make one last comment. When I was the Chief of Salt River First Nation, I just want to reiterate the working relationship we had with the deputy minister. It was an incredible, valuable relationship, and we had a lot of dialogue with the Aboriginal people. And I'm not asking any more questions, but I just want to make sure that people understand that the water is fine in Fort Smith. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Martselos. I didn't hear any questions there. Any further questions from committee? No further questions. Please turn to page 88. Environment and Natural Resources, water management and monitoring, operations expenditure summary, 2022 to 2023 Main Estimates, \$9,893,000. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Agree, thank you. We'll turn to wildlife and fish beginning on page 91, with information item on page 94. Questions?

Wildlife and fish. Okay, not seeing any questions. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So in the Minister's opening remarks, he said that there's an extra \$1.03 million for work on the Bathurst and Bluenose East caribou herds. I don't want the Minister to tell me right now, but I want an itemized list of what this money's actually for. So can the Minister commit to provide that and actually make it public? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: We have it with us if the Member wants it right now. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Or did you say you just wanted to be -- give it to him because of his time? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, okay, I'll give the Minister 50 seconds if he can read it out quickly, please. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. Deputy minister. Thank you.

MS. KELLY: So it's for herd composition surveys, collaring, Tlicho boots on the ground, the Wekweeti fire crew, the North Slave wolf incentive program, wolf management actions, the fire science research position, and O and M to support research. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, okay, thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks for that. If I could get the detailed list with absolute numbers beside it, that would be great.

I just want to know whether -- also whether any of that funding is actually for habitat protection, which has not happened during my six years here, really, and is the one part of caribou management that is yet to be addressed. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: In regards to the list and that, I believe we've already sent it to committee but we'll check to confirm that we sent it to committee. And if we haven't, we'll make sure we send it again.

But in regards to the habitat and the work that's being done in that area, with your permission I'd turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are currently finalizing a framework document, operational guidance documents, and desktop pilot exercise on mobile caribou conservation measures. And these documents describe the intent and application of Madam Chair -- of these mobile caribou conservation measures in relation to mineral exploration activities. So there's a framework and operational guidance document and a desktop pilot, and they've been across my desk and are out for interdepartmental review at this time.

We also have the Bathurst caribou range plan, and we've done four workshops that were held to advance this work in 2021. We've been providing funding, support, and background information to Indigenous governments to support this work. The Tlicho government, Athabasca Denesuline, and the NWT Metis Nation have identified some important areas for possible habitat protection. And we're supporting other Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations, such as the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and North Slave Metis Alliance to do similar work. And we're planning a prioritization workshop to build consensus on areas to put forward for conservation under the species at risk or Wildlife Act. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, I was furiously trying to scribble all of that down. But I want to confirm from the Minister, I asked for that information before and I have not received it, the itemized list. So I'm happy to get that from the Minister.

The mobile caribou conservation measures, this has been under discussion for probably three or four years now. The diamond mines actually do this to a great extent. It was actually done in the Kivalliq region in the 1980s when there was a boom around uranium exploration. They were called the caribou protection measures back then. I just don't understand why we haven't been able to do anything about this for years here. So when can we actually expect to see some actual regulatory change to implement these mobile caribou conservation measures. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yeah, so we did send a letter on January 24th in regards to that. So we apologize if it's got misplaced. We will make sure that committee gets the letter that we sent. And maybe it's not the information the Member wants on there.

In regards to the other question, with your permission I'll go to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So as I mentioned, the mobile caribou conservation measures, we have the documents created. There's been a pilot project, and we're going to continue to work with Aurora GeoSciences to trial-run mobile caribou conservation measures at one of their or partners' exploration camp in 2022. So that work is moving along, and we are working to get it through interdepartmental review at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Thanks for that. Yeah, this work has been underway for at least a couple summers. I think that it might have been slowed down by COVID. But I didn't actually get a response to my question. When will we actually see changes that require mineral exploration, in particular, to actually shut down whether there's caribou around their property? That's what these measures would do. Right now, the diamond mines do it because it's best practice; it's consistent with ESG that our Minister of ITI keeps talking about. We don't do that in this jurisdiction, though. It's voluntary. So is this department moving towards actually making this some kind of regulatory requirement? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're working right now to get these documents in place and make sure that they work and work with our partners on what the next steps will be. There is a likelihood that that could result in regulatory change but at this point, we need to get the pilot and work with the industry -- with our industry partners on this to make sure that it's effective. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks for that information. So how do we actually get the so-called "industry partners" to actually do this if it's not an actual regulatory change? Just kind of look for volunteers, or how's that actually going to work? And would it be put in place in time for this summer?

That's what I guess I'd really like to know. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'd turn to the deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To get this in place, we needed to complete the documents, which we've done, engage with the other departments, and then work with industry to test them out to make sure that they're going to work over time, and that's where we're at in the process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Maybe I'll try it one more time. So are we looking for volunteers do this, or is this going to be across the whole industry? Or how's this actually going to get piloted, and will it get piloted this summer? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: These are for exploration camps. There's already in -- it's already in place in the wildlife, with the monitoring and management plans, the WMMPs, for existing mines. The EA process and the WMMPs formalize requirements for specific operating projects, and as soon as we're done internal reviews I've already mentioned, we will be sharing it with industry partners so that we can make this work and do the testing that we need to this summer. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm not sure I'm really getting anywhere. Are we seeking volunteers for this work, yes or no? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For the deputy minister, please. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's already happening with the mines under the WMMPs, and for the exploration camps we already have volunteers who are willing to test it out this summer. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Any other questions from committee? Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess just further along these lines, has there ever actually been incidents of caribou or wildlife being harassed by drilling companies that have been charged or that the Minister is aware of? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Nokleby. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. Not during my time, but I will turn to the deputy minister for -- maybe there's more information available that I'm not aware of. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. These measures are -- how do I put this? The industry is working with us and understands that we need to look at how we can support the caribou, and these mobile caribou measures are something that are already in place with the diamond mines and we're just looking to work with the exploration camps to get them in place as well. So I'm not characterizing it as industry harassing caribou. It's that activities of the -- like, of these sites could be better managed to address caribou needs and that's what we're working together on, the balance of protecting the caribou and still allowing exploration to happen, and there's a lot of positive work that's moving in that direction. You know, these documents that I've just reviewed are quite extensive, and I'll be really happy when they're able to be out and people can review them as well once we're done our review. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Perhaps just a moment where I should have been more careful with the words that I chose in that I guess in my time in working in the field and on drill rigs etcetera, we were fairly understood and common practice that we were not doing anything that was to impact or impede wildlife, including even going to the bathroom on the tundra at times. So I guess I just wanted to hear that, you know, reassurance that there hasn't really been a problem here. And I am glad to hear that industry is working with the department. And at times, I know I had heard a lot from industry about them wanting to have the buy-in, the social buy-in, they want to follow our rules, and really the biggest issue seemed

to be was more just about clarity and how do they go through that process versus actual any issues with the processes itself. They just mostly want to know about navigating it and making sure that it's applied fairly across the board so that they can anticipate things ahead of time and not have surprises. So I was just curious to know if that was the case. So thank you. More of a comment than anything, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Nokleby. Minister, do you have anything to say? No, good? Any further -- oh, sorry, excuse me. Ms. Weyallon-Armstrong.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Okay, thank you. Thank you. I know this will take a political will. As a result of the restriction that is in place, when you look at it, it just seems like, okay, Tlicho people are allowed to go hunting once a year because of the restriction. At the same time, I know there's lot of us, you know, we do respect the work that was done by the Indigenous government and by the knowledge-keeper and the boards regarding the conservation as noted. We do respect that. But the current mobile that is in place right now, it's almost the size of the 39,000 square kilometres. That's the size of Tlicho land. And as reported before, it's almost the size as Nova Scotia. That's the mobile zone. That's the current mobile zone that is in place. Just want to know if there is a way the department can reduce the zone to give people a chance to harvest caribou for their families and communities.

Like I said yesterday too, Gameti ice road, winter road is open. So those people are going to be travelling. And the Wekweti too, it's going to be -- the ice road is going to be opening soon. It is in the process. So the department needs to take into consideration when the people go hunting, they're coming from a long ways and there is a wear and tear on their hunting equipments. There's the snow machines; you know, like the sled. Everything, toboggans. There's all kinds of things that has to be taken into consideration. But these people are providing for their families in the small communities, and it's only once a year. So people in the small communities, they are already struggling as it is with the high cost of living. And the restriction, it's a burden; we know that. It is a burden for lot of people. So that's not the only problem that I have -- or not that I have, but many of my constituent have, because I just talked to somebody today and said the seizure of caribou and of their hunting equipment, that's a problem for them, you know, because they're not coming from, like, a short distance. They're coming -- some of them -- like, in order to travel from Behchoko to all the way there is, like, 12 hours. So they're going from a long ways. And even like with the GNWT health status report that I said the day before in my Member's statement, there is not enough jobs in the communities. So how can people

make a sustainable living without their hunting equipments? So we have to take that into consideration. There's not enough jobs, and then not enough money for them to pay the court to, you know, to get their -- for their hunting equipment and all that. So there's not enough. So we have to take that into consideration too. Also the cost, the court cost. That's what I'm talking about. And just like yesterday when I was talking to one of the young parent, she said if my husband was not -- my spouse was not a hunter, a trapper, and a fisherman, my family would be starving.

And lot of the small communities, they rely on the country food. And right now, because of the restriction that is in place, like I said we do respect, you know, the work that are being done, but what people would like to see is that -- from my conversations -- and I talk to Shane -- to the Minister's assistant today before too. So what the people would like to see is that to give them a chance to reduce the mobile zone, give them a chance to go hunting to provide for their families and the communities. At least give them time.

I know you guys are going to be following the regulations. You're going to be saying, okay, well, we have to follow, we have to call Wek'eezhii, all those other people, you know, that are part of the regulations. But the assistant said it's going to take, like, at least 60 days to, you know -- to get the word out. But we don't have 60 days. By the time that you guys do something about it, hunting season's going to be over and -- well, not the hunting season is going to be over, it's just that the winter road is going to be out so it's -- there's no -- how are they going to go travel to the tundra? So that is the problem.

So what I would like to see is that if this government -- if the government, the RWED, can reduce the mobile zone, give people a chance to go out hunting for their families and for their community, harvest caribou before the ice road close. So that's what I would like to see. That's what the people are asking. So that's why I am addressing it as it is now. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Weyallon-Armstrong. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I'll start, and then I'll ask to -- you to turn to the deputy minister.

When I first became the Minister of ENR, the first thing I said to the department, I do not want to be the Minister responsible for no caribou in the Northwest Territories. I made that very clear. As we are all aware, the Bathurst caribou herd is facing a serious conservation concern and is currently at record low numbers. The latest population survey, just this June 2021, resulted in the population estimate of 6,240

caribou, down from 470,000 in 1986. I repeat: Down to 6,240 caribou.

The GNWT has worked closely with its co-management partners, including the Tlicho government, to put a range management plan action in place to support the recovery of the herd. A key action to support the herd is the mobile core -- mobile zone that the member's talked about, which is used to implement a complete harvest closure put in place by the Wek'eezhii Renewable Resources Board. That board there is a -- we work with them, the Tlicho government, we work with those guys to come up with this zone.

The zone was developed and is implemented, again, collaboratively with the Tlicho government, ENR, and the Wek'eezhii Renewable Resources Board. If the mobile zone was reduced at this time, it would put collaborative conservation actions for the herd at risk. At risk. We only have 6,240 caribou in that herd. So further detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair, with your permission.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So each week, ENR informs the public of the location of the mobile zone by sharing updated maps with Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations, posting on the ENR web page, social media, and along winter roads, and in communities.

We've been working with leaders from Indigenous governments and organizations and harvesters to promote harvest from healthy caribou herds. So there are still opportunities to harvest from the Beverly herd and from other herds and from alternate species like moose and fish. For Tlicho communities, opportunities exist to harvest from the Beverly herd and with authorization cards provided, the Bluenose-East caribou herd.

In January, the Minister committed to provide some additional funds to support alternative harvest to the Tlicho government and other Indigenous governments and organizations whose Members have traditionally harvested from the Bathurst herd. And I'd just like to add at the end that seizures only happen if there's an investigation into an illegal harvest. That's under the Wildlife Act. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Ms. Weyallon-Armstrong.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Yeah, I think today we were talking about that too, about the seizure. Yes, well, if the Minister doesn't want to be known as the Minister who got rid of all the Bathurst or known of getting rid of certain species, then I think he should change or do a Cabinet shuffle, because

that's not what the answer that we wanted to hear and -- because you -- some people are saying that that is not true. It's not true that why did they did the boundary so big. They're not telling people the truth. And for the record, what I would like the Minister do is that can he repeat who was the zone developed by, because people would like to know the truth about that one. Who was the zone developed by? For the record, can you please repeat?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Weyallon-Armstrong. We just have to be mindful of our language and how we address Ministers, making accusatory statements and whatnot. I'll pass it to the Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the zone is our caribou with our caribou herds, with collared. The zone was -- the process was developed with the Tlicho government, the ENR, and the Wek'eezhii Renewable Resources Board. So we work collaboratively with them. We work with our Indigenous governments collaboratively on this. We work with them. We have conversations. We have numerous meetings throughout the year with them. But for further detail on this, I would like to turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. ENR recognizes the challenges for those that are trying to harvest, and it's not just the Tlicho government. And our Minister met with each and every one of those Indigenous governments this year and has met with them previously, actually every year, multiple times a year, to talk about this, to provide extra assistance where we have the ability to do so for harvesting alternate species and also for healthy caribou herds.

The Bathurst herd is not the only herd that's available. There are opportunities to legally harvest from the Beverly herd as well as from the Bluenose-East herd, and there are opportunities and there's been additional funding provided for alternate species. The Bathurst herd is at a critically low level and allowing any harvest of that herd, and this is agreed to by Tlicho government and other Indigenous governments, would affect the conservation measures that we've had in place for all of these years, and it is not advisable from ENR's perspective and the Tlicho government and other Indigenous governments, as well as the Wek'eezhii Renewable Resources Board at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. No further questions on this section, fish and wildlife. Please turn to page 92. Environment and Natural Resources, wildlife and fish, operations expenditure

summary, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$16,147,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. Members: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Agree, thank you. There are additional items from pages 95 to 103. And I'll open up for questions. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So I'm looking at the information item on the Inuvialuit water board on page 98, and the Main Estimates amount for the Inuvialuit board shows zero. I don't think that that's the case but I guess I'm seeing what I thought were typos before in Main Estimates. Can the Minister tell us what's going on here? Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's just the way that the finance template is set up. We approve it after the Main Estimates. After the budget has been approved, they load their budget in. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. I guess when I look at this, I guess a bunch of dashes were loaded in. Are we actually -- is there any money for the Inuvialuit water board, then, this coming year, or not? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, there is. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, can I ask how much? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. \$939,000.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. I'm kind of curious; I don't know why we can't fix the Main Estimates. But over to the environment fund. It's on page 95.

I know that there's an accumulated surplus over time but the last three years -- or next year and then the previous two years, we're running a deficit there on an annual basis. So I'm just wondering what is the objective that this fund is kind of being managed to? Are we trying to draw it down to get it back down to zero at some point, or what is happening? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, we're not trying to get it down to zero. What we are reflecting here is the work on the new programs that were decided. So used oil tires and expanded electronics, some of you may have noticed that the suite of electronics at recycling depots is much larger than it was before. So this is to reflect that work. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Okay, well, now that we're talking about the depots, Yellowknife only has one depot. It's out on Old Airport Road. It's not at a terribly convenient location. And I think it would be fair to say that I've personally noticed some degradation in the quality of service there, and that's not probably anything to do with the operator, but there seems to be some problems getting staff or, yeah, people in and out during COVID. It's been, I'm sure, a whole set of challenges. I had understood that there was some work being done to look at a second location in Yellowknife. Can the Minister provide an update as to where we're at with that? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. The Member is right. We have been looking into it, a satellite. But for detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're still looking into that, and the next step is to put out an RFP to talk about what kind of container could work because the idea is that it would be an unmanned depot where you could bring your bags and put them in, and then they would be moved over to the other depot. There are plans at the existing depot -- a lot of this is because of COVID restrictions where, you know, and so what they're looking at is in the depot retooling how you get in and out of it so that you can maximize and have more people able to access that service. So there's work being done on both fronts. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks for that. Yeah, I can tell the Minister that I visited Greenland about maybe six, eight years ago, and in Greenland in the capital Nuuk, they had machines that you could just put an empty bottle into and cash came out at the bottom. So if they can do it in Greenland, I don't know why we can't do it here. Like, was -- and that was, like, a number of years ago. So I'm -- is that the kind of remote technology or something we're talking about here? Like, this isn't rocket science. It's done all over Europe. But is that the kind of thing we're talking about? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're actually looking at a model where there would not be cash on site, that it -- we would drop it off. You would have a card, and then there would be vendors locally that could pay out the card or it would go directly into your account once it has been counted and processed at the other depot.

We've looked at options across the board to see what could work in our northern climate outside. We are now at a stage where we're looking at an RFP for how it could actually be constructed. So there is movement on this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks for that. So when is the RFP going to be issued and when would it close and when can we expect another depot or drop off place or whatever? A little bit of a schedule. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: We're hoping to have it done in the next four months. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. No further questions. But I do want to thank them for getting on this. It's been a long-standing issue for Yellowknifers. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I just have some questions about the fair marketing revolving fund. I note that there's a 1,500 a year -- sorry, 1.5 million a year authorized limit. Is that a -- sorry, yeah, is that a cap that's based solely on, like, supply? Or could we actually look to increase this, or would we then be looking at a draw down of animals and such that it's not sustainable? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Nokleby. Minister.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We could increase it, but do so we'd have to amend the act. So what we've been doing is looking at it very closely. There's been some variability because of COVID, in particular, in the last while. We're getting less furs coming in, and there was a stockpile of them because there were -- the sales weren't happening and things weren't selling as much. But we're hopeful that that will turn around as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. So would this be an area or an item, then, that we would look to maybe want to remove from the act and put into regulations so that in the future it could be changed more easily without having to take a legislative change? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Nokleby. Minister.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My understanding is that this is specific to a financial piece of legislation because it's a revolving fund. So there would be some challenges that way. We have been able to manage with this fund the way it is for quite some time, and I think, like I was mentioning, that the anomalies are really because of some of the COVID issues, that we are hopeful will resolve. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I think that this could play a really large piece back into sort of more of the traditional economy and such and then as well as providing those supplies. And I just see that -- I feel that our fur and our crafts and all of that is just a really untapped resource for the territory that we need to be looking at more. So I guess I just want to say that I support seeing more expansion of this type of a program and then along the lines of what my colleagues were saying around the tanning and such and the ability to produce hides that we talked about the other day. So more of a comment than anything. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Nokleby. I'm seeing no further questions or additional items. Please return now to the department summary found on page 69. Whoops, sorry, I've got Mr. -- is this for the 69? Okay, the overall summary. All right, Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks, committee, for indulging me. I just had one more question. I know ENR is at the technical working group on at least one piece of legislation. I'm just wondering if we provide Indigenous governments money to support their work being there, and if so, how much, or whether that's an EIA question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. Minister.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The technical working group is made up of IGCS Indigenous governments which would not not have their funding provided. And with respect to the non-IGCS-- excuse me, the non-IGC Indigenous governments, it's on a case-by-case basis. So if it's people that are employed by the Indigenous government, then there are not costs that are provided, which is what I think we have at this point right now. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I don't have any further questions, but I'm going to -- at the appropriate time, I'll have a motion to bring forward. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): All right, no further questions on this section. Committee, I will now call the department summary, Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, total department, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$98,723,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. Members: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mr. O'Reilly.

Committee Motion

COMMITTEE MOTION 191-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 561(2) MAIN ESTIMATES
2022-2023 – ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL
RESOURCES – DEFERRAL OF DEPARTMENT
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Nice try by my colleagues. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the department of Environment and Natural Resources at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. Members: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Consideration of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources 2022-2023 Main Estimates, operating expenditures, total department, is deferred. Agreed? Thank you, Minister, and thanks to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the chamber. Thank you.

We'll take a quick five-minute break. Mahsi.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): All right, committee, we'll resume. We have agreed to consider Tabled Document 561-19(2): Main Estimates 2022-2023. We will now consider the estimates for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is included in the Main 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: Yes, I do, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Proceed with your opening remarks.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to present the 2022-2023 Main Estimates for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

Overall, the Corporation's estimate proposes an annual operating budget of \$121 million, representing an increase of \$2.84 million over the 2021-2022 Main Estimates. These estimates support the mandate objectives for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation while continuing to meet the GNWT's fiscal objectives to prioritize responsibility and strategic spending.

Highlights of this proposed estimate include the following:

- 1.1 million of forced growth funding from the Government of the Northwest Territories. This includes an initial allocation of \$947,000 to provide operating funding for the first year's delivery of federal cost sharing housing units as well as
- 164,000 for property tax increase for existing housing inventory across the Northwest Territories;
- 752,000 of on-going initiative funding from the Government of the Northwest Territories for the new Hay River and Fort Simpson homeless shelters;
- 882,000 from the Government of the Northwest Territories for collective agreement increase; and
- 68,000 travel budget reduction as part of the GNWT-wide reduction.

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

- Fostering strategic partnerships, including these with the federal and Indigenous governments to increase the number of affordable homes and reduce core housing needs, especially for seniors and vulnerable persons;

- Reducing the cost of power by investing in energy efficiency solutions for both new construction and repairs; and
- Delivering increased opportunities for homeownership.

This concludes my opening remarks, Mr. Chair. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Minister. Does the Minister wish to bring witnesses into the house?

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the chamber.

Would the Minister please introduce her witnesses.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I have with me here today Ms. Eleanor Young, president of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, and Jim Martin, vice-president of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Welcome. Committee has agreed to forego general comments. Does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document? Yes, we will defer the Housing Corporation summary on page 373 and review the estimates by activity summary, beginning with community housing services starting on page 377, with information item on page 378. And I'll entertain questions from the committee. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Previously, I know a number of local housing organizations have expressed their interest to be able to go and get money from the federal government. I know the Yellowknife Housing Authority would love to be able to submit to these various federal funding pools, but they are not permitted to. Can we just explain why we won't let these organizations get money? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The local housing authorities run under a service agreement that is binding with the Housing Corporation. They are not government employees, and they are not a nonprofit organization. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young elaborate on the response. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Deputy minister.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, and the Minister is correct. Essentially the LHOs are an extended arm of the corporation and from a perspective of CMHC, they would be deemed to be part of the corporation when doing applications. That would not stop us from working with the LHOs, and we do so when we're working on some of the applications currently. So we could continue to work with them on an application if they wish to do so. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I guess -- so there's kind of this weird thing going on where there's local housing organizations and then there's authorities and some, in fact, are nonprofits registered under the Society's Act, and I'll note that those ones actually can't be investigated by the ombud, which is a weird kind of mistake that was made in that schedule.

But is there any actual reason for this difference between some of them being nonprofits and some being, you know, essentially creatures of statute under the act? Is this something we're going to correct, or is there actually a reason for it? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With the action of the renewal coming forward, we will be working very closely with the local housing authorities but should they want to submit, they can submit through the Housing Corporation with our support. I will have Mr. Jim Martin, vice-president, to elaborate on a response. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Vice-president Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, so as the Minister alluded to, the authorities are established under legislation whereas the associations are established under a society act as was mentioned. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Martin. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I guess I -- you know, this happened long before I think any of us, even Mr. Martin. I'm just trying to understand if there's any reason why there is creatures of statutes that are authorities and then just nonprofit societies associations with different powers doing different things with different reporting structures and if there's any benefit to having these two different systems run on maintenance. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. So with our renewal, we are going to be looking at all policies and agreements throughout the corporation, and this is one of them as well, too, that we're working very closely with and also reviewing our contract agreements with them as well too. So I can follow up with the Member. And just to be very clear, you know, we are working towards changes going forward with the corporation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, another kind of anomaly is they all somewhat have different appointment mechanisms. Yellowknife specifically, the mayor and a group of Yellowknife MLAs get together and we decide who is on the Yellowknife Housing Authority. Others are directly appointed by the Minister. Some have a bit more community input. This is according to some ministerial directive out of the 90s, I believe. But I really don't think it's my role to decide who's on the Yellowknife Housing Authority, and in fact, I would like them to be at arm's length nonprofit that perhaps some sort of membership has input on who sits on that board. Are we going to look at how we appoint people to these authorities and associations as part of the review? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And that's exactly what are going -- we are working with right now. The other thing that I have noticed is you're correct, that we do have some Indigenous groups that do have representation on these boards. We do have forms of leadership as well too. But we're looking at pursuing those changes.

One of the things that I have -- I have mentioned too when re-electing these board of directors I guess is that I don't want them to serve more than two consecutive terms. So I've made that very clear throughout the Northwest Territories. But going forward, we will see a more streamlined clear approach when we're dealing with the LHOs. And if we're looking at those changes and there's no relevancy to having those representation in selecting the boards, then we will be working closely with the LHOs throughout the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess I, you know, what I envisioned happening here is probably not a one-size-fits-all model. I think some

Indigenous governments probably want to take over the LHOs and run that maintenance function. I personally, in Yellowknife, don't believe we need one at all. I would be happy to tender maintenance, either privately or to the municipality, to a dev corp, anyone, or in fact just bring them into the housing corp. And I know there's a lot of cost in having these LHOs. They each have an office. They each have staff. They each have admin. They each have a board. And, you know, I think a review of -- I guess I'll just speak on behalf of Yellowknife. I'm not sure that we're getting the benefit there, considering they're not actually allowed to make any decisions about applying for funding or buying units or even who we lease from.

So in reviewing this, are different options on the table? Can we perhaps, you know, look at some cost savings or just, you know, a variety of models of how we provide, you know, essentially the maintenance and property management and the collection of rents in communities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for that comment. I can bring that back to the department. But I want to be very clear that with the function of these LHOs and they're allocating units at the ground level and 80 percent of our budget is actually allocated to the smaller communities, so outside of Yellowknife. I just wanted to express that as well too. But I could follow up with the Member with that. But I just really want to defend the representation of the LHOs at the community level where they make the decisions of what needs to be built in their communities. They -- I want to give them more decision making powers. I want them to be able to -- I want to be able to more communicate with the chairperson, chairperson to Minister. I want that to change. And then also if they are going to be challenging our policies and it doesn't work at the smaller community level, or even in the larger centres, this is the board and this is the structure that I would like to -- I would like to be working with. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I guess I'm going to say that I will offer no opinions on what I think LHOs in the communities should do. I'll leave that up to community MLAs and them. But I noted in Yellowknife the staff, they're not public servants, and they have quite, you know, high maintenance costs. They're nowhere near the private sector in what it costs to maintain and operate buildings. You know, perhaps that's a good thing, the number of staff they have, if you need to get something fixed in a public housing unit in Yellowknife.

But I'm just wondering if we've done some sort of cost comparison of different options. Or is it cheaper essentially to have LHOs with staff who are not GNWT public servants? Is that part of the reason for their existence? I'm just kind of confused about how this came to be, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And this has been something that has probably been, you know, functioning in the smaller communities and the larger centres for quite some time. I'm not too familiar with the history and why we created the LHOs and why there's the board structure. I will have Ms. -- President Young respond to the answer. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. President Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And like the Minister, you know, I have -- my background was actually initially with an LHO here and even I can't explain some of the rationale about why it was created because it was -- it predated me. But in my time here, I've seen a lot of ebb and flow about levels of responsibility to LHOs and, you know, it's very much changed with the government relationship over time and sometimes there's been more responsibility locally, and other times there's been other things. So I think that's part of the reason for the desire to have the conversation as part of the renewal. But I think one of the things you're pointing out is the need for flexibility. Not only for different sized communities or different structures but also, as you've alluded to, in some cases Indigenous governments may want to take the LHO over, and sooner, and in other cases they may not. And we started to hear some of that conversation as part of our engagement on the renewal. So I think whatever we come up with as part of the renewal has to be able to be flexible enough to accommodate some of these -- these different situations that are going to evolve over time and not lock us in to one model that may not work. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I just, yeah, want to continue on with this conversation. I too find this all to be quite confusing and think that it definitely needs to not be a one-size-fits-all answer because for me, if an Indigenous organization is doing it, that's great; we're going to empower them and then to take care of their people. But in Yellowknife, I find it hard because I don't know how I can ask or intervene because it is a third party entity. It doesn't make sense here because we don't have an entity that's, you know, an Indigenous

organize -- or government that's specific to Yellowknife itself. So I also agree that some sort of change for maybe Yellowknife and efficiencies could be found and then, yes, leave communities to come up with their own solutions for that.

My question, though, is around the apprenticeship program here. I'm glad to see there's more money there -- I'm so blind -- between -- from the 2020 actuals to now. But I guess my question is knowing that apprenticeship programs and such are a continuum, and they -- you know, there's a three, four-year type situation that goes on, how do we make sure that we're being efficient and not losing apprentices out of the system? We have a high turnover often of employment in the North, and I guess I worry that there would be employees that start an apprenticeship program maybe with the housing corp or somewhere else, and then they can't move that to others, or can they? Like, so are we ensuring that they're not just getting kind of these piecemeal parts of an apprenticeship program without actually getting to be apprentices? And I'm wondering what mechanism -- or sorry, getting to be journey people, and what mechanism is being used to kind of track that efficiency? I'm not sure if I really explained that well but the Minister or deputy minister can comment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Nokleby. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And apprenticeship is highlighted in our contracts going forward when we're putting out that we have such a huge unit delivery this year. So then I think the last number that I did have, and Jim could correct me if I'm wrong, but I think had 19 apprenticeships all together. And currently right now, we do have apprenticeships that are required through those contracts. And the other thing is that we do have such a large construction delivery that I would like to see that opportunity for who's entered into those apprenticeships be able to move on to the existing projects going forward. But -- and how we track them and take care of those numbers, I'll turn it over to Jim. But the other thing I wanted to highlight is that we do have red seals, and we do have apprenticeship certifications at the ground level. I'll just -- if vice-president Jim Martin can elaborate on the response, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Vice-president Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the Housing Corporation does continue to certainly support apprentice hires here in the NWT. We do have an in-house program with an intake of about 12 we try to maintain year to year. To date, we've seen 21 apprentices journey certified through this program. So we're quite pleased with that.

In terms of the outcomes, also in addition to our in-house program, the Housing Corporation has also introduced, back on April 1st, 2020, a requirement for our general contractors to establish at least one apprenticeship work assignment for each of our contracts. So to date, we've supported 33 work assignments with the contractors. So between a combination of the contractor work opportunities and attrition in our LHOs, we're quite comfortable in saying that the LHOs that do complete our program are getting hired. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks for that answer. And I guess to the -- I'm assuming that with an apprenticeship program that it's not always tied specifically to the employer but is an overarching program, and I see people nodding their heads "yes", so that's -- that's good. I guess that was where my concern is.

I'm just looking at the training and support workshops line. You know, there's only the 2,000 spent in 2020-2021 and then, you know, back up to 250 -- I'm assuming that these are -- these numbers are so low because of COVID? Could the Minister confirm that, from the 2020-2021 actuals? Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Nokleby. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to turn the response over to president Young. But I do know that for the number of our training opportunities for our workers that there was a delay in the delivery. So I'll just -- I'll turn it over to president Young. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. President Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And that's correct. With -- unfortunately with travel restrictions, many of our folks have not been able to travel to scheduled training and that will be something that we will be trying to catch up on in the near future.

It also impacts, like our formal training as noted through educational institutions, but even our regularly scheduled workshops to do training for LHO managers, tenant relation officers, foremen, those things which normally the corporation would sponsor at least once annually, we've not been able to do over the last two years, and so that's something we need to now catch up on and bring those folks back together to do some of the basic training that we would normally deliver to those cohorts and build that network amongst the people doing that job in the communities, and that's really important. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, yeah, that I would expect. I guess, then, leading to my next question would be has there been an ability or an interest or looking at what it would cost to put some of these programs on -- put them virtually, and could they even be put virtually because it is a trade type -- or some of it is very hands-on training. And then as well too, I think this is a great way to support skill sets so -- or to increase capacity within communities. So is there a want to, like, increase this funding over the next while, or is this going to be high? Is this high just as a catchup, and we'll see it decrease later? To me, it's a great line item and I'd like to see more of it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Nokleby. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll have president Young elaborate on the response. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): President Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I think this is one of the items that we're very much looking forward to having conversation with the LHOs about, to talk about both the style of delivery but what we're delivering and whether we're delivering enough. I think in the House before, we've talked about client-centered service training for our frontline staff. That's something that we need to start delivering and develop and deliver across. So we may look to do face-to-face initially but then that could be something that could be, as new folks come on stream, become more of an online delivery. But those are -- those are decisions I think we're looking for local housing authority input on before we make some final decisions about the next fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I appreciate the deputy minister's response -- or sorry, the president's response. You know, I can't stress enough how often when I am talking with my constituents that are housing clients how really a lot of it, it comes down to how they feel they've been treated and often they feel that they have been disrespected or that there's been a rudeness. And I mean, I get that frontline workers also have a burnout and a -- a need to almost protect themselves in a way by having a little bit of a maybe a reserved or removed manner. However, I feel that, you know, it is critical that these -- that the frontline workers here understand that this is a social client service, and I

do see that the department appears to be moving in that direction. So I'm pleased to hear that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Nokleby. Minister, you want to...

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Just a comment, and I appreciate the -- the Member's comments as well too because training is something that I really want to be identified for our LHOs and to support them, whether it be from -- from client service to, you know, finance. And I'm kind of looking at a similar model to what MACA had provided for the senior SAOs, senior administrative officers. And also the training that they did have for their boards and their councils there. So something similar, not identical, but my -- my way of thinking is very similar to what MACA has already set up. And the school of community government as well too, and what they can offer. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Minister. Committee -- oh, Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to make one last comment as I appreciate the Minister's comments around the training and awareness. A new thing that I recently had a constituent make me more aware of where we're often talking about trauma-informed approaches to things, but I think we also need to have an FASD approach to our work and it's going to be something that you're now going to start to hear me saying to a lot of the Ministers on that side of the room, that just as much as we are affected by trauma in the North we're affected by fetal alcohol syndrome as well. So I think that there's an aspect in that training that needs to be a part of that as well. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Ms. Nokleby. Committee, we've got our hard stop. Member from Frame Lake, what is the wish of committee?

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I move that the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): The motion is in order. The motion is non-debatable. All those in favour. All those opposed. Motion is carried.

---Carried

Will the Sergeant-at-Arms please escort the witnesses from the chamber.

Report progress.

MADAM SPEAKER: May I have the report of Committee of the Whole. Member for Deh Cho.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. BONNETROUGE: Madam Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 23, 29, and 38, and Tabled Document 561-19(2): 2022-2023 Main Estimates, and would like to report progress with one motion. Madam Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. There's a motion on the floor. Do I have a seconder? Member for Nunakput. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion carried.

---Carried

Thank you. Orders of the day, Mr. Clerk

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): Orders of the day for Friday, February 25nd, 2022, 10 a.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Replies to Budget Address Day 4 of 7
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Commissioner Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Motions
18. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 23 - An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act
- Bill 29, Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act
- Bill 38, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2021
- Tabled Document 561-19(2), 2022-2023 Main Estimates

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the Day

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. This House stands adjourned until Friday, February 25th, 2022, at 10 a.m.

--ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

