



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, October 19, 2022****Members Present**

Hon. Diane Archie, Hon. Frederick Blake Jr., 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 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 270-19(2):
PROHIBITION CREEK ACCESS ROAD
PROJECT PROCUREMENT PROCESS AND
PROJECT UPDATE

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, today I am providing an update on the Prohibition Creek Access Road Project to correct the public record, refute some misinformation, and also address some of the recent allegations raised in this House about the procurement process for this project.

First, the Prohibition Creek Access Road Project is, and always has been, advanced as a capacity-building project. The goal is to help prepare businesses, workers and residents to make the most of opportunities provided by the eventual construction of the entirety of Mackenzie Valley Highway.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories originally received federal funding to advance the design and construction of 13-kilometres of all-season road from Canyon Creek to Prohibition Creek, which is near Norman Wells, in June 2020. That same month, the GNWT announced this project would be procured through a public tendering process, following the receipt of a regulatory approval, and completion of final design. In November 2020, the GNWT obtained approvals to advance the project. However, prior to initiating the procurement process, an environmental and engineering issue was identified at the Christina Creek Crossing, which is approximately halfway between Canyon Creek and Prohibition Creek, which

would require additional design and regulatory work. In an effort to keep the project and capacity-building in the region moving forward, a decision was made to split the construction project into two phases.

Phase 1 construction included building 6.7-kilometre all-season road between Canyon Creek and Christina Creek, and Phase 2, the construction would also include the remaining 6.3 kilometres from Christina Creek to Prohibition Creek.

The GNWT initiated a public procurement process for Phase 1 construction in October of 2021. The amount of time that lapsed between securing regulatory approval and initiating the procurement process was caused by the engineering challenges at Christina Creek and the change in project approach that I just described.

HRN Contracting Ltd. was the only business to submit a bid for Phase 1 construction through that public procurement process. Ultimately, the sole bid exceeded the available funding, and the procurement process was cancelled to re-evaluate the project's budget and financing.

The Prohibition Creek Access Road Project is one of several infrastructure projects that have experienced cost escalations recently. Large and systemic cost increases associated with the COVID-19 response, supply chain issues, inflation, material and labour shortages, and rising fuel prices have had an impact on project costs.

Following the cancellation of the public tender, the Department of Infrastructure engaged with Canada to revise the project delivery plan and very recently secured additional funding for Phase 1 construction, as well as design and engineering work required for the remainder of the 13-kilometre road, including the Christina Creek Crossing.

Mr. Speaker, I can also confirm that a negotiated contract request from HRN Contracting Ltd. for Phase 1 construction was also received following the cancellation of the public tendering process. This request is

currently being advanced as per the provisions in of the GNWT's Negotiated Contracts Policy. HRN Contracting Ltd. is a GNWT Business-Incentive-Policy registered business in the Sahtu, owned by a Sahtu beneficiary and, as mentioned, was the sole bidder through this previous public procurement process.

Mr. Speaker, while it would be inappropriate for me to discuss the specifics of a contract on the floor of this House, I can assure you that it's our intent to advance this project to see the local and regional benefits maximized within the GNWT procurement and Negotiated Contract Policy, all of this to say, Mr. Speaker, this project has not been without its challenges. However, the allegations of nefarious dealings raised in the House are fundamentally untrue. It is our hope that procurement will be finalized in the near future, construction on this important capacity building project can begin this fall, and we are hopeful that this can be celebrated as the important milestone that it is, and that the years of work to get to this point are not tarnished by these recent allegations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 271-19(2):
HOUSING NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENT
PARTNERSHIPS

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, partnerships are key to addressing the territory's housing crisis. Through partnership with Indigenous governments and communities, we are effectively finding housing solutions that recognize the unique needs of communities across the Northwest Territories. As we advance the Housing NWT Renewal Strategy, I am pleased to report that these partnerships are already leading to real, meaningful work that will improve quality of life for residents.

When this House was last in session, I spoke about the memorandum of understanding on housing we had just signed with the Tlicho government. Today I am pleased to say that Housing NWT has also signed a memorandum of agreement with the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated. This MOA provides a framework for intergovernmental cooperation on housing-related matters, including community housing planning, procurement, coordinated program delivery in the Sahtu communities, and information and data sharing.

Housing NWT recognizes that the Sahtu region faces significant housing challenges. By working in partnership with the Sahtu Secretariat, we will maximize federal funding, increase affordable housing for residents, provide training opportunities, increase economic activity in the region, and build the capacity of Indigenous governments and communities. The MOA sets a path for a more collaborative relationship between Housing NWT and the Sahtu Secretariat, consistent with the Housing NWT's new approach to Indigenous partnerships under the new mandate.

Mr. Speaker, discussions between Housing NWT and other NWT Indigenous governments are also underway to develop cooperative agreements on housing. Last June, Premier Cochrane and I committed to a joint review of Housing NWT's policies and programs, with participation of the Council of Leaders housing working group, and it is already changing how we will be doing work with Indigenous governments. This is consistent with Article 23 of the UN Declaration that states that Indigenous people have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining social and other programs that affect them.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say through the renewal of Housing NWT and programs and policy review, we are putting those words into action. We are increasing our engagement with Indigenous governments about the location and design of housing units. We are having open discussions with Indigenous governments on how to maximize economic opportunities that come with housing construction and operation. We are also looking at new partnerships and innovative approaches for building housing across the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, this collaborative work is helping us develop housing solutions that will benefit residents and the communities in which they live in. I am pleased to see Indigenous governments seize an increasing role in housing, and that the federal government is now flowing distinction-based funding to Indigenous governments in the NWT.

Housing NWT recognizes that there is no "one size fits all" solution. Individual Indigenous communities and governments have different needs, capacities, and aspirations, and it is important that their housing solutions cater to their unique circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, through collaboration and partnership with Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations and communities, we will be able to effectively address the

NWT's housing crisis and meet our mandate commitment to increase the number of affordable homes and reduce core housing need in communities across the territory. Housing NWT will continue to build its relationships with Indigenous governments so that together we can find housing solutions that fit the needs of their residents and all the residents of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the staff of Housing NWT for working collaboratively with the Indigenous groups and helping us build our relationships. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Ministers' Statements. Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1193-19(2): ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, colleagues, it was my great honour to travel last week and early this week with the Premier and my colleague from Kam Lake to the Arctic Circle Assembly in Reykjavik, Iceland. In an increasingly troubled world, Canada, and in particular Canada's North and its Indigenous people, need to work hard to strengthen our international bonds with the nations of the circumpolar world.

I had the opportunity to sit on a panel examining the potential benefits of public/private partnerships that include Indigenous governments and organizations and came away with a new and better appreciation of the full participation of our people in the modern economy.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Hay River South who, as deputy chair of Caucus, introduced motions last night in Committee of the Whole to implement the recommendations of two independent Commissions - one to review MLA compensation and the other to recommend new electoral boundaries in the upcoming general election.

With less than a year remaining until the next election, it is critical that we clarify the size of this House and its boundaries at the earliest opportunity. Residents, potential candidates, and our election management bodies need to know what the landscape looks like to make informed decisions in the run up to next October. I don't intend to reflect on the decision that was made in the Committee of the Whole last night to reject the

recommendation of the 2021 Electoral Boundaries Commission, but as Caucus chair I think it is crucial that the public understands what that decision meant and could mean.

Had the motion carried, I would have introduced legislation next week to establish new electoral boundaries for the 2023 election. As it stands now, the status quo will remain. That leaves us with a number of ridings, particularly Yellowknife North and Monfwi, that are unacceptably larger than the average riding size. It remains to be seen whether this will result in a legal challenge. But as we all know, the boundaries have been challenged twice before.

In 2015, the House accepted the recommendations of the independent Electoral Boundaries Commission, and a challenge from the City of Yellowknife for more seats was unsuccessful; however, in 1998, in the infamous Friends of Democracy case, the Assembly, like last night, rejected the recommendations of the independent Commission. This successful court challenge is why the number of MLAs from Inuvik and Hay River increased from one to two and why the number of MLAs from Yellowknife increased from four to seven.

Electoral boundaries are very political and challenging to get just right. It's not just about the arithmetic. It's about how we organize our public government politically and constitutionally. Yes, Yellowknife has roughly half the population of the NWT and less than half the number of seats in this House. But that doesn't mean Yellowknife's underrepresented in our government or at a disadvantage compared to the rest of the NWT. Far from it. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to finish my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Mr. Speaker, the independent Commission's report wasn't perfect. It proposed a new and somewhat clever way to avoid adding seats to our legislature and avoiding increasing the numerical influence of Yellowknife Members in this House. In my view, the recommendation of the best possible outcome for small communities in the NWT who are always struggling for greater influence in the halls of government. Some may think that last night's vote was the end of the matter for another eight years. Mr. Speaker, I'd be surprised if that was the case.

Last night's decision has effectively turned this matter, a very political matter, over to the courts to decide for us. So far history has shown that the courts tend to defer to the

Legislative Assembly when it follows the advice of an independent commission chaired, by the way, by a sitting or retired Supreme Court judge. History also has shown that results can be very unpredictable when we ignore that advice and let the courts decide for us.

I fear that we may find ourselves scrambling to implement court-ordered boundaries in the weeks and months leading up to the next election; boundaries that could very well see more seats added to this House and more seats for Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker. I hope that I'm wrong on that but in this uncertain world, political instability can spring up anywhere. As leaders, we need to see both the short-term and long-term implications of our decisions we make in this House and do our best not to sleepwalk into constitutional issues of our own making. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1194-19(2):
HOUSING IN NUNAKPUT COMMUNITIES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I get started, I'd like to send thoughts and prayers home. Today they're laying my Uncle Henry Steen to rest. So thoughts and prayers are with my family back home.

Mr. Speaker, I've said in this House many times before, housing in Nunakput faces major issues. Residents in my riding deal with the highest cost of living in the territory. We face overcrowding. We don't have enough homes. And the homes that we do have are in need of major repairs.

In Nunakput, the riding as we know, 13 percent of our homes are overcrowded. 28 percent of our homes need major repairs. 25 percent of our homes are in core need. Mr. Speaker, I have constituents who have put blankets on their floors in the winter so the snow wouldn't come in from the door and the windows. So it's very confusing to me, Mr. Speaker, when residents in my riding want to purchase a housing unit that the corporation doesn't fast track these requests. These units in the Housing Corporation are barely maintaining with the wind and the snow blowing right through homes in the winter. If a resident wants to purchase a unit, shows interest, the Housing Corporation should make it happen.

It's been said in this House many times the Northwest Territories is in a state of housing crisis. One solution to housing is to increase

the number of our homeowners. So it's very troubling for me, Mr. Speaker, and my constituents in my riding, that have been waiting, in cases for years, to advance homeownership options.

I have a couple in Sachs Harbour who have been waiting for two years since they submitted their complete application to the Minister and her staff in Inuvik on December 2020, an agreement to enter a rent-to-own housing option. Since December 2020, the couple's been waiting and paying rent with no assurance that the Housing Corporation is under the rent-to-own agreement. My constituents already the highest cost of living in the Northwest Territories. Now the local housing organization in Inuvik appears to be creating more financial hardship by delaying long-term housing solutions for this young family in Sachs Harbour.

Mr. Speaker, this is not only one example. There is a constituent in Paulatuk who has have been waiting for almost six months for an answer from the local housing organization. Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable. I will have questions for the Minister of Housing at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1195-19(2):
ARCTIC SECURITY AND SOVEREIGNTY

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the last week I had the opportunity to attend and speak on a panel at the Arctic Circle Assembly. Arctic nations from around the world discussed the unique challenges and opportunities faced by circumpolar nations in the face of climate change. Youth, Indigenous leaders, bureaucrats, politicians, researchers, and even royalty, discussed an array of topics from Arctic biodiversity to green energy and mental health to critical infrastructure.

Infrastructure development is a key circumpolar focus as the world continues to warm. In September this year, the Arctic ice covering the Northwest Passage reached its lowest levels on record. Researchers noted it was pretty close to ice-free in major channels.

Mr. Speaker, 80 percent of the world's biodiversity is found in the Arctic and stewarded by 6 percent of the world's population, largely Indigenous people who have protected the land since time immemorial.

Today, the world is looking to the Arctic for its resource wealth, efficient shipping routes for legal and illegal trade, and military presence in the continued assertions of Arctic sovereignty. In response, circumpolar countries are evolving both their responses to climate change and Arctic infrastructure. Countries like Iceland now extract 85 percent of their energy needs using renewable energy infrastructures with lofty goals of reaching 100 percent. The US is pushing grant commitments to ensure 100 percent of Alaskans can access broadband internet. And Greenland is building three new international airports. The Arctic world is opening whether we want it to or not, and circumpolar nations are taking note and taking action.

Arctic sovereignty is reliant on Arctic security, Mr. Speaker, and Arctic security is reliant on healthy communities. Healthy northern communities rely on security in healthcare, education, employment, food, and yes, housing.

My biggest take home this week, Mr. Speaker, is that Canada's Arctic infrastructure drastically lags behind the rest of the circumpolar world. In 2019, the federal government released its Arctic and northern policy framework. But the policy lacked timelines, measures, and probably most importantly, Mr. Speaker, a budget to achieve its goals. While the way forward is a global collaboration and maintained Arctic zone of peace, Canada still needs social and economic infrastructure and healthy Arctic communities to maintain a seat at the table.

We are not ready for the future of the Arctic. Arctic security and Arctic sovereignty needs social and economic infrastructure in the Arctic today. If Canada does not offer the much-needed Arctic infrastructure to build healthy communities in the Canadian Arctic, we know that someone else will, but at what cost, Mr. Speaker? I will have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1196-19(2):
SALE OF MACTUNG MINE

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I have some good news. Our government says it has sold the Mactung mining property; a zombie that just keeps on giving.

The owner, North American Tungsten, went into creditor protection after GNWT agreed to

take on this operation under devolution. GNWT allowed that company to keep the Mactung property as part of its financial security for its water license. Cabinet ended up buying Mactung for \$4.5 million through a special warrant that bypassed the Legislative Assembly. Cabinet then spent almost \$480,000 on a partial clean-up of that property, plus all the work trying to sell it, not including months of staff time. The GNWT hired a southern consultant to submit a land use application to the Yukon government for an imaginary exploration program to hype the value of the property.

Just after the May-June 2022 sitting and with no advance notice to Regular MLAs, Cabinet accepted a letter of offer from Fireweed Zinc Ltd., a Vancouver-based junior mining company, to buy the property for a total of \$15 million subject to a number of strict conditions:

1. Fireweed pays the GNWT the sum of \$1.5 million on signing the letter of intent;
2. Fireweed will pay GNWT an additional \$3.5 million within 18 months of finalizing of a definitive agreement, apparently targeted before the end of this year;
3. Fireweed will pay GNWT an additional \$5 million upon announcing its intention to construct a mine at either the Mactung or any other portion of their mineral interests in the Yukon at Macmillan Pass; and
4. Fireweed will pay GNWT an additional \$5 million upon announcing its intention to construct a mine at Mactung.

I am doubtful that GNWT will ever get all the money and staff time back from the Mactung property, or that it will ever go into production.

In terms of lessons learned, there don't seem to be any. I was hoping that GNWT would recognize that mandatory financial security in forms that are irrevocable and liquid are required to ensure this kind of mess does not happen again. Eight years after devolution, GNWT has failed to fix the problems with resource mismanagement left for us by the federal government. It's past time that the Auditor General of Canada looks at the promise and practice of post-devolution resource management. I will have questions for the mining minister later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1197-19(2):
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, in this House and throughout the territory, we've been talking about the need for a Mackenzie Valley Highway for decades. The Mackenzie Valley Highway has been in the planning stages since 1960 when the federal government was trying to advance the roads to resource programs. And to put this in perspective, my mother was one; status Indians were given the right to vote on July 1st, 1960; January 16th, 1960, Gordie Howe became the leading goal scorer in the NHL. That's how long ago.

The current proposed Mackenzie Valley Highway is just one part of what's needed for transportation in the NWT. The current proposed Mackenzie Valley highway is 321 kilometres from Wrigley to Norman Wells. The estimated cost of this project to get the highway corrected to Norman Wells was about \$700 million in the last time it was made public.

In 2018, the government started building the road from the north side down from Norman Wells to Wrigley, a 14-kilometre long access road. So, Mr. Speaker, we still have 307 kilometres remaining to connect Norman Wells to Wrigley. We have the Inuvik to Tuk Highway that opened in 2017, but there's no all-season road connecting Inuvik to Fort Good Hope and Norman Wells.

Mr. Speaker, we know roads bring prosperity to people and communities, and we know that residents in the Beaufort Delta rely on the Dempster Highway to gain access to the south. And this is largely a Yukon road, which is poorly and inadequately maintained. It also provides the exit route for residents and business to go spend their money outside the territory. Residents in the Beaufort Delta want access to the southern part of the NWT. People in the Delta are ready and willing to build a road connecting the Dempster Highway outside of Inuvik with a road to at least Fort Good Hope where they can connect with the winter road in the winter months.

Mr. Speaker, we have a major critical piece of infrastructure that can reduce the cost of living, increase investment and resource development, increase opportunities for tourism, trade, businesses from the north to the south of this territory, and yet GNWT continues to advance this critical transportation corridor in a piecemeal.

Mr. Speaker, what is the plan to connect the northern portion of the NWT to the southern NWT? Why isn't the GNWT taking lessons

learned from the Inuvik to Tuk Highway and extend this road further south? Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Where are the community plans to support the work to advance this road to connect and open up the communities? It is the mandate of the 19th Assembly to advance development of the Mackenzie Valley Highway. The government states it will do that through establishing collaborative partnerships with Indigenous governments. I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1198-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES INFRASTRUCTURE
INVESTMENT IN TU NEDHE-WIILIDEH

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are running out of time in this Assembly to make good on our promises to improve the lives of our residents. I have not had the privilege of a membership in his House for as long as my colleagues, but that doesn't mean I have been idle in advocating for the needs of my riding of the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding. But I have had to look at what has been done before my time here to get a clearer picture of the resources available, budgets, action plans, policies, legislations, and a mandate having for my work and why I so often speak to how existing resources can be reprofiled to address pressing needs in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance tabled the 2023-2024 Capital Estimates for \$328 million down from an average of \$405 million over the last nine years. As per the Minister's statement, this was done to bring a more realistic approach to Infrastructure spending as the GNWT does not have the capacity to develop at all the projects budgeted for in the previous years.

I am not sure I completely agree with the Minister that this has created unrealistic expectations. It does not encourage good planning and necessitates an unnecessarily large borrowing plan. After all, everyone and their dog knows of the NWT chronic deficit and infrastructure that is holding back our economic growth. Not only that, but until very recently money was cheap to borrow. Of course inflation, supply chain shortages has

made these projects more expensive. But the initial investment were and continue to be sound.

Mr. Speaker, let's talk about housing. I have made the serious challenge facing my constituents with homeownership and homeownership repairs my mission during this sitting of this House. I hope that the Housing NWT minister is starting to get annoyed with me because I am in desperate need to see how to get work on a real solution that helps the people I represent.

The capital estimates provides \$35.5 million for Housing NWT. We know that the policies of Housing NWT are part of the problem getting these valuable resources into our communities. I will again propose that Indigenous governments are a better position to make immediate use of these funds than are centralized Yellowknife based bureaucracy. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are housing strategies and programs that work in all Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh communities. Lutselk'e is putting in trailers as we speak. Deni'nu Ku'e and the Fort Resolution Metis Council are working towards completing a housing need assessment and assets inventory. The Yellowknives Dene are soon to realize customized housing designs through federal funding programs that will yield a fresh take on housing development in other communities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm tired of seeing the best of intentions fail in the face of our housing needs. It's time to try a different approach, if only in the communities I represent. Let's take a small chunk of that \$35 million and give it, no strings attached, to the Indigenous governments of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding and help them move forward on their terms towards adequate and affordable housing in their communities. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the finance minister. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1199-19(2):
LESSONS LEARNED FROM RECENT
FLOODING

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the last several years we have seen major flooding severely impact not only the town of Hay River, but other communities along the Mackenzie and

Liard Rivers. There is considerable speculation and discussion as to why flooding appears more pronounced.

Mr. Speaker, we were to have lessons learned after the devastating flood in Fort Simpson two years ago and now, after the Hay River flood, it is apparent we have not learned a great deal.

This government sat back and provided limited to no pre-emptive analysis, indicators, or supports for emergency preparedness prior to any of that flooding. This government needs to develop systems and processes that protect lives, assets, and infrastructure. We need experienced and knowledgeable people at the table to provide guidance and planning.

Mr. Speaker, as of today, I have not heard of, or been made aware of, any post-flood assessments or reports completed or that are underway by this government to address shortcomings from flooding that took place over the last two years with the exception of a paper titled "Analysis of Regional Flood Risk Planning and Evacuation Procedures following the May 2022 Hay River Flood."

This analysis was prepared by local Hay River resident Matthew Miller, who has studied and worked in water resource management, flood modelling, and municipal and transportation drainage design. I thank Mr. Miller for doing what this government has failed to do.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to utilizing the services of those knowledgeable in flood plain management, flood preparedness, and emergency preparedness, we must look to include Indigenous knowledge of the area and climate history. Mr. Speaker, we also know the potential for flooding occurs well beyond community boundaries. This is not just a community issue; it is this governments issue, and it is an inter-jurisdictional issue as well therefore we need to collaborate with our southern neighbours to talk watershed management.

Mr. Speaker, for this government to place responsibility for flood management and preparedness squarely on the shoulders of communities is wrong and unacceptable. Flooding is our reality, and it is now that we need to establish a group, or team, within this government to deal with flooding. We need to provide, in collaboration with communities and Indigenous governments, flood forecasting, flood preparedness measures, evacuation plans and mitigation measures, for all communities on our river systems throughout the NWT. Anything less would be a failure on the part of this government. Mr. Speaker I will

have questions for the Minister of MACA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1200-19(2):
CHILD AND YOUTH CARE COUNSELLOR
PROGRAM

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2020, the GNWT expanded its Child and Youth Care Counsellor Program, or CYCC, to provide more mental health supports for students and families across the territory. On February 21st of that year, the Yellowknife reported a total of 49 new counsellor positions had been created in the territory for the program. The purpose behind this expansion was to enhance and increase mental health supports for children and youth. The job description for a Child and Youth Care Counsellor states, quote, "The position is responsible for implementing specialized assessment and therapeutic programming. The CYCC is a Member of the community counselling team and provides integrated and therapeutic mental health and behavioural programming in collaboration with school personnel and other health and mental Health and Social Services professionals."

But Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that a licensed specialist, such as a licensed psychologist or professional counselor, is not the requirement for this position but, rather, it states typical qualifications of a Masters in child and youth care, counselling, social work, or education. The Minister committed, on May 26th, to increase the transparency of the acceptable equivalencies within the job description.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that it is hard to recruit experts and specialists to the North, however these are the people who are dealing one-on-one with our vulnerable children and youth. I hear from residents that CYCC staff are mostly non-Indigenous southern social workers that are moving to northern communities, not trained counsellors. The young graduates are coming here and providing frontline service to our children with little to no understanding of the true impacts of intergenerational trauma and the residential schools. Layers upon layers of trauma, grief, addictions, and mental health challenges.

Mr. Speaker, it is no surprise that these workers don't stay long. They're paid less than teachers with less vacation time. The position isn't incentivized, and the lack of experience

and commitment to the North is likely creating more harm than is doing good.

The Minister has stated in this House that the department is planning to evaluate the program this fiscal year. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, how is the department working with parents and school administration to evaluate the effectiveness of this service? What is the GNWT doing to ensure our children receive the best possible counselling care available, given how they've consistently failed them for years now, and it's only gotten worse under this Cabinet and Minister.

Mr. Speaker, I will be submitting my questions for the Department of Health and Social Services as written question tomorrow. Given this Minister's want to always shoot the messenger, I am not interested in giving her a forum any longer. Thank you

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1201-19(2):
CHANGES TO EXTENDED HEALTH
BENEFITS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few weeks ago the Department of Health and Social Services launched a survey talking about some proposed changes to the extended health benefits. I gave it a quick glance, and I was pretty happy.

Mr. Speaker, multiple times in this House I spoke about the essential gap of the working poor in this territory who do not have any extended health benefits. It appeared the department had a plan to means test extended health benefits and provide them to those people. My only feedback at that time was that the income threshold was a little low, and we should perhaps increase it to provide this benefit to more people.

But it came to my attention, and was raised by a number of people, that we are actually doing something else instead of just providing extended health benefits. We're removing the specified disease conditions that currently give people benefits. At first, I thought this couldn't be true. I went back to the survey. I read it a number of times, and nowhere did it clearly state that this is what we were doing.

Mr. Speaker, if we're going to consult on the question of whether to means test extended health benefits, that's fine. But if we're going to consult on the question of whether to provide extended health benefits at the expense of those who presently have specified diseases, that is a completely different question.

Mr. Speaker, after I raised this in the media, the department reissued the survey and somewhat attempted to clarify what they were doing. But I still don't believe it is sufficient. And I am getting many questions that I simply cannot ask, and the survey and engagement do not ask - specific questions about how certain drugs work? How, if you have cancer but you get this specific prescription drug, is that covered; is that insurable? Very nuanced questions about how copayment will work. Questions about what if I have a specified disease and I can't find private health insurance?

Mr. Speaker, I've sent these people to the department, and I'm assured that the department is working with these people, but I think some much more targeted engagement needs to occur for all the people who presently have specified diseases and we're providing benefits to. That seems to be the main people we need to talk to.

And then from my end, Mr. Speaker, even more questions need to be answered. How many people are we presently providing benefits to? This is not presented. Is this actually going to cost us money or save us money? Mr. Speaker, I suspect that this is a cost saving measure in that providing benefits to people with specified diseases is quite expensive and generally just because you're poor, it doesn't mean you have a specified disease.

I will have questions for the Minister of Health about a number of these things and hopefully get some answers to people out there about what it is we're actually doing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1202-19(2):
EULOGY FOR DAVID GARGAN

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on May 28th, 2022, David Roger Gargan, passed away at the aged 71 years old. David is survived by his wife Jean, his daughter Renanne, two sons Joseph and Jay, his five grandchildren, two brothers and three sisters,

as well as numerous great grandchildren, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

David grew up in Jean Marie River and Fort Simpson. In his younger days, he enjoyed being on the land with his parents and siblings. Besides the traditional way of living, he loved to play sports, especially hockey. This is how I had the opportunity to meet him in 1992, as part of the Rangers hockey team. He was always early for the games and was chatting up the team getting us ready to play whoever. As I got to know him, he was always talking about how much he enjoyed playing with his brother Alex. They were dynamite together. Always knowing what the other person was going to do.

Mr. Speaker, as much as he enjoyed playing hockey, his true love and passion was his wife Jean. She was his high school sweetheart. After every game, he would quickly get dressed and head out. One day we asked what the rush was, and he said that he had to get home so he could spend quality time with his better half. When we asked Alex was David always like this, he said yes, especially when it came to his wife and children. Later, his love and passion was expanded to include his grandchildren and great grandchildren.

David was a hard-working person who enjoyed all aspect of work he did. He took pride in getting things done right the first time. If he needed help, he would ask. I can tell you he was always respected by his co-workers and bosses. He worked hard to get things done in a timely manner.

David was well known for his humour. He enjoyed telling stories and he had a long list of stories. I can tell you, there were many times when we lost track of time because of these stories. On top of his humour, there is one thing that stood out was David's generosity. If he was able to part with something, he would do it. Like the old saying, he would give the shirt off his back; this was David. I can tell you that he had a lot of friends all over the North and will be sadly missed by many.

The Lafferty and Gargan family would like to extend their gratitude and appreciation to all those who come to pay their respects to David. Mashi for showing him support, love and compassion. The family are grateful for everyone's kindness, prayers, and words of comfort and support during this difficult time. Mr. Speaker, he will be sadly miss by us all.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and community at this time. Members' statements. Returns to oral

questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1195-19(2): ARCTIC SECURITY AND SOVEREIGNTY INVESTMENT

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, on October 17th, 2022, the Premier said in this House "northern security is not just about robust military presence. It is mostly about building strong resilient communities through significant investment in critical infrastructure like roads, ports, telecommunications, and energy."

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada released its Arctic and Northern Policy Framework in 2019. This framework speaks to goals like ending poverty, eradicating hunger, reducing suicides, broadband for all, enhanced trade, and further goes on to specific infrastructure investments.

So I'm wondering can the Premier explain how the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework will advance critical infrastructure in the NWT, like the roads, ports, and telecommunications and energy that she spoke of on the 17th, and how the federal government plans to implement this framework with no timelines or budgets associated with it? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The MLA is absolutely correct. The Arctic and Northern Policy Framework was released in 2019 which -- and then after that work was done, the next step was to be implementing the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework. Sadly to say, the federal government, we've met twice in this government on that with the federal minister, perhaps due to COVID, perhaps other reasons. However, it's important, the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework is not just about making sure that every funding that goes to the Northwest Territories is identified in there. That policy framework was to address the huge gaps that we have in the Northwest Territories compared to our southern neighbours. We all know that. We know that we're lacking in supports and services compared to the south. You only have to drive south and see what they have compared to

what we have here. So I am hopeful. The Member is also right. There is no budget. There's no strategic plan to develop for it. And I also have the same concerns. A lot of time and resource went into developing that framework, and I don't want to see it sit on a shelf. I don't want to see every money that comes to the Northwest Territories just get labelled UNDRIP. It needs to be to address the gaps that we have. And I'm hoping that the federal government would hear that and that the federal government will start implementing significant funding to the Northwest Territories so we have the same quality of living that every Canadian should be -- should have, be entitled to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just this past Monday in Iqaluit, there was a collection of policymakers that got together in order to discuss this very thing, Arctic sovereignty. And that was in response to a \$4.9 billion investment from the federal government. So these conversations are still happening. And having this conversation twice over the course of this Assembly just isn't enough. We need more attention from the federal government here in the western Arctic and, especially when here, any NWT resident could tell you, that the North definitely felt things in a more heightened way over the course of COVID. So our need for these items were just heightened in COVID. So really, our conversations should have been more frequent and louder in my opinion, Mr. Speaker.

My next question is the Premier explained on May 30th, 2022, that the Council of Leaders is the regional implementation body for the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework. And so I wonder if the Premier can identify the priority areas the Council of Leaders is undertaking with respect to Arctic security and if there is a timeline and budget for the Council of Leaders to advance Arctic security in the NWT that can be shared with this Assembly?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll start with a little bit of a clarification. Absolutely, the Member is correct, we need to be lobbying the federal government for this on a regular basis. The Council of Leaders table has met with the Minister -- the federal Minister, Minister Vandal, twice in this Assembly. However, myself and Ministers have constantly met with the federal government, and every time I meet with the federal Ministers, applicable Ministers, I bring this up because why do the work if it's not going to be addressed?

So the Council of Leaders did identify gaps. They identified their priorities.

In the last meeting with the Minister Vandal, the Council of Leaders agreed that that table would be the table that would implement it because they were the table -- they were the Indigenous governments and us that developed the framework. So I believe that last meeting was in September, late September. And the issues that were identified by the Council of Leaders were mental health and addictions, community-based treatments, infrastructure. They identified housing, clean energy, transportation and governance, and the economy, green economy and remediation.

I do want to say that by working together, all Indigenous governments and the GNWT and the federal government, I do have to give credit where credit's due, has implemented -- has put a phenomenal amount of housing money in this government that has gone to all Indigenous governments and the GNWT, and that shows what can be done when we working together. However, we do need to identify next steps. We've identified our priorities at that table. But the federal government needs to work with us to identify how we get there. It cannot be a unilateral decision on what happens next. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. I will just, cognizant of the time, question's asked and answered in almost five minutes, so let's shorten up the preamble, please. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I'm trying to get all my words in this week after two missed days.

In March of this year, Mr. Speaker, the three northern Premiers wrote to the Council of Federation to express concern with Canada's Arctic defence and security and requesting Arctic sovereignty and security become a standing agenda for these meetings. And so I am wondering if the Premier can explain how the federal government responded to the issues of the northern Premiers, how the northern territories are working together to advance the northern interest in Arctic security, and if the intergovernmental council is involved in those conversations as well? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also wanted to -- this is a passion of mine as well so I will try to be more concise on this one.

The three territories did work together to develop a pan-territorial chapter, things that we have in common across the territories. And so from that chapter, we've been lobbying, the three of us, I hate to say it, it may be inappropriate, but I call us the dynamic trio, the three Premiers have been lobbying the federal government together to actually lobby for the needs of all territories because they're similar in some areas, different in others. So again, we've been meeting not only with the federal government, we've been carrying our message nationally and internationally at any table that we can get it. We actually bring forward the needs of the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework because it needs to be addressed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Final supplementary, Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate that we're -- that we're -- this government is being consistent in asking for more money. But in 2022, the federal budget announced a total of \$8 billion new funding over years in response to the defence policy from the federal government. There was \$40 billion -- or sorry -- yeah, \$40 billion to modernize NORAD over the next 20 years and \$4.9 million to update aging North American air defence systems.

So I'm wondering if the Premier can explain how the federal budget that has been set and has been allocated to Arctic security will impact the NWT specifically, and what can we expect to see happen in our territory as far as Arctic security? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member again is right, the federal government is implementing military defence mechanisms and a budget associated with the safety of the Arctic. And I support that. We do need to support the safety issues. But I've been adamant in saying that Arctic safety is not just about missiles or boats in the sea. It has to incorporate Arctic sovereignty, and that means addressing our gaps. We need to build our economy. We need to close our infrastructure gap. We need telecommunications. We need ports. We need all of the things like I had said that contribute to healthy and vibrant growth in our communities. Because if we don't have communities, then we're open land, and that is not what I want to see. So they have to go hand-in-hand. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1196-19(2):
HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING IN FORT
SMITH

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on October 5th, 2022, I sent an email to two Ministers requesting for integrated case management services for two constituents. These constituents are a couple who are experiencing homelessness and barriers to obtaining income assistance. In talking with the housing Minister about this, she referenced a housing strategy that has not been tabled yet.

I'd like to ask the Minister is she okay with Norman Wells, Hay River, Inuvik, Yellowknife, and Behchoko having a homeless shelter and allowing Fort Smith to go without one? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and just thank you to the Member for that question. But just a correction, Norman Wells does not have a homeless shelter.

We are working with the Indigenous groups throughout the Northwest Territories to try to find solutions on how to deal with people who are experiencing either homelessness and do have challenges at the ground level. We don't have integrated case management in the smaller communities; therefore, we try to work very strongly, very strategically with the employees at the ground level, working with the local housing authority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I asked for a joint response from the housing Minister and the ECE Minister to assist with this dire situation that this couple is in. I've only received bureaucratic answers with no solutions, as usual with this Minister. When will the Minister provide actual solutions for my constituents and direct her staff to be more compassionate to vulnerable and homeless people? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And in respect to the Member's riding, housing has worked very collaboratively with the Indigenous groups within that riding. We have been able to more housing units on the ground as well too. But not only that, just working with the individuals and having to try to find housing solutions. Housing cannot solve the housing crisis on our own. We need the partners at the table. Housing has been working very closely with the Member's

Indigenous governments within her riding. And we continue to work in collaboration together in trying to find housing solutions at the local community level. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it seems there's a lack of compassion and urgency to the suffering of vulnerable people experiencing homelessness. I would like to ask the Minister where is the compassion from this government and from her department? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for the question as well. This is an area that we have taken a different turn within the Housing portfolio as well, and we're starting to find that working with the nonprofit organizations throughout the Northwest Territories do need a lot more support and a lot more training in dealing with their clientele. Housing has been working throughout the Northwest Territories providing those services agreement and trying to come up with solutions as well. Within the portfolio, we did -- we are looking at further programming. Just one at the top of my head is the Canada housing benefit that we did increase. It first had started off at \$200,000, and now we're at \$2.5 million. And with that, we're able to really understand the housing need and the crisis throughout the Northwest Territories. But we continue to work together with the communities to try to find further solutions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as stated earlier, I sent an email to the housing Minister on October the 5th, which was 14 days ago. That's 11 business days. When will the Minister provide a response to that email? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I'm receiving the responses back from the department, they often go back for further analysis as well too and looking at what we possibly can have at the ground level with -- which is, honestly, very, very limited. We try to look for what resources do we actually have in order for us to be housing people. And we have just a limited amount of housing units in the Northwest Territories. We also have a waitlist that is out there as well. We also deal with women and children and families who are either returning back from treatment, dealing with domestic violence, and we are trying our best to be -- trying to be more accommodating to the people of the

Northwest Territories. But I really would like to -- like I further said, is that we need to be working as a community and together and with all stakeholders at the table in order for us to really address these -- these strong housing needs and issues throughout the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1197-19(2):
HOUSING IN NUNAKPUT COMMUNITIES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in addition to my statement today, NWT housing crisis, we're facing a health crisis also. But it stems work -- like, living together in overcrowded units, it's really drawing a lot of -- a lot of hurt and hardship between families because there are just not enough homes.

Mr. Speaker, I reference since we started sitting in -- for this 19th Assembly, 15 times I've made Member's statements in this House in regards to the housing issues that we do have in the territory. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister plan to reduce overcrowded homes in Nunakput riding and when that -- when is -- we could work together for that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member from Nunakput as well too. I understand where all the Members are coming from as well too. And with the portfolio, we're trying very hard to find strategies and be very strategic on our investment for the Northwest Territories, and also investing fairly and recognizing that all of our people throughout the Northwest Territories are facing a housing crisis.

For the Member's riding, as of to date, we are going to be investing \$9.2 million for the 2023-2024 government. We have \$8 million that is going to be completing eight public housing units and repairing nine housing units. We have \$1.2 million for homeownership repair program for private homeowners and minor repairs for NWT units.

I would also like to include, Mr. Speaker, that Paulatuk will be receiving four units. Tuk will be receiving four as well. Ulukhaktok will be receiving two. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Or mahsi.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that. I'd like to -- you know, how can -- how many people are currently homeless under the housing in my riding in Nunakput, Mr. Speaker? What's the plan to increase housing options for these people? Are we able to take off through the CMHC, able to give these houses away like we planned? And we're waiting -- one couple in Sachs Harbour for two years now to get that program out. So how do we get them to get that house off the books from CMHC to provide a new house in Sachs Harbour to be able to provide for our younger generation that's having families but having to stay with their parents. This is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. We need an answer for this and sooner than later. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for his question. With the housing portfolio, there's also the community housing plans, and I know it might seem kind of minor to the Member, but we need to come up with a strategy at the community level in order for us to be at -- for us to be working and trying to address the housing needs strategically at the ground level. These community housing plans are also lobbying documents for the federal government in trying to acquire further funding.

There was an announcement for the distinction-based funding. I don't have the number in front of me of how much the Member's riding as received. But I am interested in looking at those housing sales, Mr. Speaker.

I also would like to see transfers of those units, if they're single family dwelling, I would like to see those and further look at those files as well. I don't have information at the tip of my fingers right now. But I need to see the rate and condition of those units and the possibility of an options for transfer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation receives \$76 million last year for housing. Is this Minister working with the Inuvialuit to try to work together to combine funding to get houses into the communities? And then my last one -- or not my last one. But the people in Sachs Harbour, for say, they paid two years into a program that they were told that they had the unit. But there was -- the two years that they paid the rent without the House being signed over. Will the Minister commit to that couple once, that verbal commitment was made by the Inuvik housing authority, that money they paid for the last two

years goes into the purchase of that unit? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take a look at those files as well that the Member is referencing with the two years with that agreement, and I would like to see what is the current update on them. So I'd like to encourage the Member to send that over to my office.

And also Housing does work very closely with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation as well too. They just recently met September 22nd. I don't have those further details. But I can follow up with the Member and give him an update. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that information's been sent over two years and it's been sent numerous times to the Minister's office. Not to her office, per se, to the Inuvik Housing Authority. We need some answers here. We got people on waiting two years now. And of all places, I mean, we don't have many houses in Sachs Harbour. We need more housing units in Sachs Harbour. We take this one off, we give it to them under -- they're paying for it. But at the end of the day, they're going to be able to take that house and get another house under CMHC because we're only allotted so many units in the community. So that's going to be a big help. But the Minister has to make sure that -- I'm asking her to get this done for the -- and there's two of them that I'm really pushing for and the information's already there. So she could get her staff in Inuvik to do that, because we're waiting for an answer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will follow up with the Inuvik office and with those specific files and get back to the Member. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1198-19(2):

MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY PROJECT

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure. Can the Minister describe the status of the relationship with all Indigenous governments situated along the proposed Mackenzie Valley Highway route on this project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the work we're currently focusing on, which is the 321-kilometre alignment to Wrigley to Norman Wells, have established an MOU for a collaboration on the projects with Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated. We also have a contribution agreement with SSI and the PKFN for work under this project. We also have a memorandum of understanding with the PKFN for their consideration on the project collaboration. We also have provided contribution funding to Norman Wells and Tulita Renewable Resource Councils for some traditional work. So, Mr. Speaker, we are working with the Indigenous groups. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So nothing north of Norman Wells? Okay. Is the work to advance the road connecting Norman Wells and Wrigley on budget and on track? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for her question, because I think that's really important to get this out there. So in 2018, the Department of Infrastructure obtained \$140 million in federal support, under the National Trade Corridor Fund, to be able to support things like the environmental assessment, some of the planning studies for the portion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway from the communities of Wrigley to the Wells, which, again, is a distance of 321 kilometres, as well as the construction of the Great Bear River Bridge and the Mount Gadet Access Road.

We also have successfully obtained funds to be able to construct phase 1 of the Prohibition Creek Access Road, which is about \$25.5 million for construction of that phase.

The next critical milestone, Mr. Speaker, in the process of submitting for our developers assessment report, which we anticipate to be submitting to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board early 2023. So following the completion of this critical community engagement and Indigenous traditional knowledge work that is currently underway, we anticipate the EA to take approximately two years, followed by approximately one to one and a half years to obtain all of the regulatory permits for construction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, residents and business in the

Beaufort Delta are ready and willing to build a road south and undertake the work required to develop community plans to get communities ready in the Beaufort Delta. That's what they do; they build roads. So can the Minister identify the length of the road and the budget, even if it's a past budget that might have been an estimate budget, required to connect Inuvik to Fort Good Hope? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And Mr. Speaker, I respect that the Member was able to give me a head's up; however, that head's up was just not enough time to be able to go back and get a figure from the department. So I'd like to get back to the Member for this one because this is something of interest to me and perhaps you too, Mr. Speaker. I mean, we've talked about this in the past. So I think, you know, we can get back to the Member. Yes, I'm just not ready to ballpark a figure like this given some of the costs escalations in all our other projects. Thank you.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's just for us. I think it's for the whole of Northwest Territories. I think it's going to be a great thing if this happens, if this comes to life in my lifetime, because it's been since 1960 that it was first talked about, like I said.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister commit to investigate the feasibility of building the Mackenzie Valley Highway from the Inuvik south to connect to Fort Good Hope and get that work started, as well while they're working on it, let's get some money rolling in, let's get this part of the highway done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and I think the Member's going to be happy with my commitment on this, to be able to look at investing in the feasibility study. The long-term vision for Mackenzie Valley Highway has always been to connect communities from all the way up the valley, up from Wrigley all the way to Tuktoyaktuk, with the all-season road. You know, reducing our reliance on some of our existing network of winter roads, which are increasingly at risk to some negative impacts of climate change. So, Mr. Speaker, I see the Member's quite happy right now. So if she's happy, I'm happy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1199-19(2):
HOUSING POLICY ISSUES

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I raise earlier this sitting that many elders are having difficult time with significant debts to the Housing Corporation for many, many years ago. In many cases, the elders are not aware of why the debt is owed. The Housing Corporation is in many cases garnishing their income which means the Housing Corporation takes a significant chunk of every modest paycheque they make. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to direct her officials to immediately enter a stay of execution of existing garnishee orders registered against elders by the Housing Corporation so they can keep more of what little they already make until such time as her officials can develop a program to allow people to apply for forgiveness of their housing debts? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm -- thank you to the Member for the question as well. And I'm assuming that these are debts that are for homeownership and that we had established these units -- these were access units and 15-year agreements that were established over 20 years ago. That was an agreement that we did have with CMHC at that time. I'd have to follow up with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: It's also arrears for housing public unit. So can the Minister commit to working with integrated service delivery to ensure that low income families at risk of evictions are fast tracked to the support and services they need, which includes access to legal aid programs, financial plan, and childcare, career and employment support, healthy living and healthy choices. Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question as well. And I just wanted to speak about the community housing support worker that we did have in the Member's riding as it was a pilot project a couple of years ago. And we are still interested in reestablishing that program because it was quite successful. But that is followed up with the Tlicho housing working group where Housing is participating. I will request a further update on where this position is because it's exactly what the Member is requesting is something like integrated case management wraparound services. And this is exactly the responsibility

of this position. It would greatly support her riding or her community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mr. Speaker, this is regarding the bilateral agreement. So Mr. Speaker, many of our Indigenous governments have a keen interest in increasing the housing stock of their regions and communities. In its new mandate, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation commits to pursuing government to government relations with Indigenous government as she mentioned. This is a welcomed change towards developing bilateral relationships. Most of our Indigenous government are very interested in taking responsibility and taking over housing assets from the GNWT. I want to ask the Minister, what is the framework currently being used to transfer housing stock from the GNWT to Indigenous governments? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. Indigenous partnership is a priority that I do have within the portfolio, and we have made great success in developing those relationships. And this year we had signed an MOU, a memorandum of understanding with the Tlicho government in regards to housing for us to better support and come up with stronger solutions and also lobby the federal government for addressing the housing crisis in the Member's region as well. And I'm just looking forward to providing the Member with a further update on the meeting that was just recently had in September. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, with that in mind that she just mentioned, you know, to have a relationship with the Indigenous government, then what I would like to see this government do, then, is transfer the 14 units that the Tlicho government are asking for, I would like to see that happen. You know, if they're going to continue have a good working relationship with the Indigenous government. So the federal government seems interested in supporting housing stocks being transferred to Indigenous governments. Is the GNWT receiving assistance in facilitating these transfers? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In our recent bilateral that we did have with the Tlicho, there was mention of the 13 units, but it was not on the agenda. The Tlicho government did receive

distinction-based funding as well, and they were looking at housing delivery coming into the community but also looking of housing repair. We do have the working table with the Tlicho government, and I don't have a further update on what their priorities are at that table. But Housing is working with them very closely to address the housing needs in the Tlicho region. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral question. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 1200-19(2):
HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE
INVESTMENT IN TU NEDHE-WIILIDEH

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Finance.

The capital estimates allocate some \$35 million to Housing NWT. As I've said many times, I am firm in belief that this money would be better spent through contribution agreements with Indigenous governments. Does the Minister agree that Indigenous governments in the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding are efficiently and effectively managing their financial resources with respect to housing and programs and strategies? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for Finance.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, if I can redirect that to the Minister of Housing. It's housing questions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to the Member's question, I was kind of confused there for a minute there that the question was for the Department of Finance. But it's not my role to be telling the Indigenous groups how to spend their money within their riding. But as a housing minister, we have been working with the Member's riding very closely for them to be successfully receiving co-investment federal funding and the rapid rehousing initiative funding as well too to the Member's riding as well. And he did see a number of units that were delivered to Lutselk'e. And the conversation between the housing and the Indigenous governments in the Member's riding continues. And I look forward to further successes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am directing that question to the Minister of Finance but then the Premier spoke up and passed that on to Housing. So I'm not sure if the Minister of Finance was able to speak to this question. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Once it's redirected to another Minister by the Premier, the Minister of Housing is -- you have to direct your questions to her. Minister -- so, yes, there's really no question. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess what I'm trying to get is that, you know, I've been trying to really advocate for housing for our people in our communities in the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding. And, you know, I've been trying to really work with the Minister of Housing Corporation of how we could address and build relationships with Indigenous governments. You know, I see these MOUs are good ideas but, you know, they're -- they only go so far, and I don't hear no commitments from this government at all in trying to fix these problems we're having in our community.

So will the Minister work with the same Indigenous governments and the Cabinet colleagues to transfer housing projects scheduled for 2023-2024, along with other resources, to Indigenous governments housing programs through a contribution agreement? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question as well too. I'm not sure which units that are in question to be transferred over to the community. But I'm interested in working with the Indigenous governments. And if this is something that is a request that Indigenous governments are interested in doing, I would like to further that conversation and if they would be able to identify the units to me, I'd like to see what condition they're actually in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, you know, this issue is really not going to go away. I mean, we had 50 years to get our act together to provide housing for people here in the Northwest Territories. And in the Minister's statements earlier, she talks about the MOU and the great success she's made in the Sahtu region. But the chiefs are very clear on what I heard on Cabin Radio on August 26th on the SSI meeting. The chiefs made it very clear, bring your cheque book. So what we're saying now, Mr. Speaker, is that we want to see the Minister to come to our communities and look at building new

relationships so we can improve housing in our communities. Right now it's not working. So I'm just saying that, Mr. Speaker, that we have an opportunity to build new relationship and I hear from the Minister, but I don't see no action. Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question as well too. And, you know, I disagree with the Member. You know, Housing has been working with the Indigenous governments throughout the Northwest Territories, and we're trying to do things differently and really looking at the communities' perspective on what is required at the community level, what is it that the community would like to construct, what type of housing would they like to enter and to get into.

I just wanted to comment for the co-investment, the Yellowknives Dene have received \$90 million in co-investment funding. Housing has also provided \$133,000 to work on their community housing plan as well too. And also looking at the rapid housing initiative for Dettah and N'dilo, housing is at the tables with the Indigenous governments in trying to find these solutions. The Indigenous governments are the drivers of housing projects in the smaller community. We are there to support them. And if there's an opportunity to be flying in and getting into the Member's riding, I am open to be doing that as well. I did travel to Lutselk'e over the summer, and I did see the significant need of housing at the ground level. But I'm willing to be travelling into the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I heard this -- I've been around for a while, and 50 years Housing Corporation was here. And we're still talking about that today, and our communities are still suffering from housing repairs and I produced documents here showing that we have problems in our community. We have problems with cockroaches in our communities. We got big problems but yet we can't seem to be fixing these problems. And what I'm hearing from Indigenous governments now is that they're really tired of Housing Corporation's policies and bureaucratic red tape. So we're going to have look at new ways to building new relationships. So the sooner the better on that. That was just a statement, not question. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Give the Minister opportunity to respond. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I just wanted to also comment on our policies and programming that is actually being reviewed right now by the Council of Leaders working group where that consists of Indigenous leaders throughout the Northwest Territories as well. I'm not sure if Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh is participating in those meetings, but I can provide the Member with an update. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1201-19(2):
LESSONS LEARNED FROM RECENT
FLOODING

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for lessons to be learned, one must conduct a review and assessment of the event. In this case, it's flooding. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of MACA confirm if there will be any followup analysis in the form of reports prepared by this government on the flooding in both Hay River and Fort Simpson, and if so, when can we expect to see those reports? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Member for the questions here. Work is underway to conduct an after-action review of the 2022 flood and the 2021 flood. Once completed, the recommendations will be public. MACA has worked with ENR and hydraulic experts to examine the cause of the 2021 and the 2022 flood, and we'll be doing the same thing with the 2022 flood. The work has been included -- include the production of flood extensive planning, our mapping of it, the flood zone and that. And this information will be provided to the communities of the town of Hay River and K'atlodeeche First Nation in October so -- at the end of October. In regards to the after-action plan, unfortunately we will not be able to get -- it's going to be -- it's being done, but it will not be done until after late next year because we have to be -- as part of it is the flood recovery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm, other than raising buildings, has the

department started to work towards identifying flood mitigation measures for Hay River that would include watershed management, flood mapping, establishing flood risk elevations, berms, dredging, drainage, embankments, stabilization, dewatering equipment, and an action plan? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. Yes. So the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is working with the Town of Hay River, K'atlodeeche First Nation, and the federal government on how we can address these situation mitigation and work with them to get this work done. So we're in the process. We're working with them. And, again, it takes a little bit of time, and it's a little back and forth but we are working with the town and K'atlodeeche First Nation as well as the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm if any specific mitigation measures have been identified for Paradise Valley, The Corridor, Old Town, West Channel, and the New Town. You know, we don't know what's going to happen next year. So I think we have to take some decisive action and prepare for it. Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer is yes, we are working on that. We're working with the town. There's a lot of discussion again. We're also working with the federal government, and we're trying to find and identifying funding sources to address this mitigation, to make sure that this situation doesn't happen again or we're prepared for it if it happens, or floods happening again. So we are working with the town as well as K'atlodeeche First Nation on this very topic. And, again, like I said, we're reaching out to the federal government and trying to find additional funds and funding sources to deal with this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I hope the Minister and the department isn't putting all this work on the shoulders of the community because they just don't have -- they just don't possess the resources required to undertake this assessment review, evaluation. So can the Minister confirm if there is a communication plan in place that is directed at disseminating and gathering information to and from residents on mitigation solutions for specific areas in Hay River. Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I know the first part. No, we're not putting -- just downloading on to the town or the K'atlodeeche First Nation. We're working together collaboratively to do this. As per the part of the question in regards to the public information component, yes, that's part of the plan. That's part of the strategies that we're working on. We're making sure that this information is public and we're making sure residents here in the town, in this area are able to provide this information moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1202-19(2):
SALE OF THE MACTUNG MINE

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. The news released on the sale of Mactung property says that GNWT will get \$15 million. Can the Minister tell us whether we have received the initial \$1.5 million from Fireweed Zinc, and where are we at with a definitive agreement when another \$3.5 million may be coming our way? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can confirm that the initial \$1.5 million payment from Fireweed Metals was received in June of this year. And further to that, Mr. Speaker, they were given 18 months in order to do some due diligence work. I understand that there has been some work done over the last exploration season this past spring/summer and that we are expecting that the final agreement will then be signed -- or rather the purchase agreement will be signed which will trigger the further payment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. Details on the agreement for the sale of this property seem to be quite scarce. Can the Minister confirm whether the terms of sale will be binding on any future owners of the property in the case where Fireweed Zinc decides to sell the property or loses it? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, both the letter of intent as well as the asset purchase agreement would be binding on future owners should Fireweed Metals not be the owners of the property. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that information. It's not clear who may be responsible for the residual junk at the property and any closure reclamation that might be required. Can the Minister tell us whether our government is on the hook for any responsibility and liability for the current condition of the property? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The property's actually relatively undeveloped and as such -- well, I mean, I can't speak for what the company may have decided upon but I can certainly say that the GNWT is selling the property as is, and that was part of the -- that will be part of the asset purchase agreement, that they -- all the liabilities, to the extent that there are any, will be transferred and that, of course, is the basis on which the agreement is moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. I'm happy to send her some pictures of the junk when we're finished here. But in my view, the Cantung and the Mactung saga is another example of post-devolution mismanagement of our resources. When I asked the Minister for lessons learned last time, she said that lessons learned would be considered at the time of sale. So I'm going to try the question again. Can the Minister explain what lessons have been learned about financial security and public liabilities from the Cantung and Mactung saga? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that the lessons learned here are necessarily the ones that the Member's expecting insofar as in this case, Mactung actually has turned out to be a fairly strategic and important critical minerals and metals project; it has been sold; it's been sold with the liabilities transferring to the owner. And hopefully, we'll actually see the development of a critical minerals and metals project. So in that sense, it actually has all gone quite well, which isn't to say that the government generally wants to go out and be the buyer of a mine. But in this sense, it did work out.

As far as securities go, well again, Mr. Speaker, this was a project that originally, under its previous ownership, that did go into CCAA, did not go through the board processes that we have today with respect to ensuring regulatory compliance. The processes that we have now are, in my view, far more robust

than what they were and would hopefully not result in a situation where properties are undersecured. That is not anyone's expectation.

And, you know, so again, in that sense is that a lesson learned from this, or is that a lesson learned from devolution? Mr. Speaker, this -- again, I don't know that this is the time for that lesson. I think we've actually learned that lesson in another context. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1203-19(2):
CHANGES TO EXTENDED HEALTH
BENEFITS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I believe the department will work to create, you know, a number of information items on each of the specified health conditions and work with those people to get the answers they're seeking moving forward. But I think as legislators, there's some fundamental questions about, you know, whether this is a good idea in the first place. And I think one of those is costs.

So my first question for the Minister of health is how much are we currently spending on providing extended health benefits to those with specified health conditions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services is working to make the extended health benefits more equitable. And we put out a number of products here, a discussion paper at FAQ, and a plain language summary, which talks about the supplementary health benefits for low income people, and a drug program for catastrophic costs. The amount of money we're spending right now on this, the 54 specified disease conditions, is \$4.3 million, and that's for 1,514 individuals. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I guess the next question is do we know -- I'm actually somewhat unsure whether this is going to save us money or cost us more money, the switch from a specified list to a means tested model. Do we know how much this current proposal will cost us or save us, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. We're in the information gathering phase, and I'm gratified to say we've been getting a lot of feedback. So we don't have a specific model that we can apply costing to. But given the fact that we're going to include more benefits for more people, we expect the program to cost more. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, yeah, I guess we're going to have find out some data there because I imagine providing prescription costs to people who already have specified diseases is more costly than, you know, just because you are a low income earner doesn't mean you get any prescriptions at all. We might bring thousands of people in who barely use the benefits. So I get there's some work to costing this. But to me the department is kind of completely gone out and engaged on, to me, what are separate questions. One, do we want to provide a means tested program; and two, do we want to get rid of the specified health. I don't know that we should be framing that as binary. And I guess my question to the Minister is why can't we keep both, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the question. I don't see it as a binary situation here. The specified conditions' list covers 54 diseases. If you have ALS, as one example, you're not on that list. You're not getting any help from the government of the NWT. So the starting point was to make the program more equitable for people who not only have drug costs for chronic conditions but they also don't have any drug coverage at all. So that means for the most basic things like antibiotics. So the thing about this is that people and their conditions don't fit into these little silos very easily. So what we're trying to do here is ask the people who have the means to help pay for their own coverage and to support the people who don't have the means to get the coverage they need to live their best lives. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, my hope is that we could find a way to work with each of those people on the specified health condition list. I know there are some very expensive drugs, and there are some people with some very unique circumstances. And we may have to keep some of the conditions. Also I know we may have to revisit the list. There's some confusion to me why cancer's on there if it's insured; what it actually is accomplishing by being on there.

But my other question is the federal government recently announced a federal dental care plan. It was means tested. And I believe there is announcement in the work at the federal level to announce a federal pharma care plan. I imagine it'll be means tested as well. I'm just wondering if the Minister has any insight from her federal colleagues about any news in that area or how that would affect our current plans moving forward. It may make a lot of what we're trying to do moot, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all, the Member has raised this issue about cancer drugs, and I want to give him a specific answer to this. If somebody has cancer and they're receiving treatment in a hospital, those drugs are provided to the person without any means testing or any charge. If after the cancer treatment there is a prescription that is preventative, like tamoxifen for breast cancer, then that is part of the specified condition list, and it would be captured in this new program. So, again, in response to his points, there is -- there is consideration for a drug benefit plan that would cover catastrophic medical costs. For example, the most current treatment for cystic fibrosis is \$300,000 per year per client, which is obviously a very huge amount of money for anyone to undertake.

So in terms of the federal government, we don't have any additional information about when pharma care is going to happen. There was a report given to the federal government on the pharma care program prior to the 2019 election, and we delayed the review of the supplementary health benefits program to wait for more information to come forward on pharma care -- national pharma care. It hasn't come forward. So we've decided that we need to move forward with our own review. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1204-19(2):
TRANSFER OF HOUSING UNITS TO
INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Due to housing crisis, what we need is action. Mr. Speaker, how can this Assembly help the Government of the Northwest Territories transfer housing properties to the Indigenous government faster? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to the Member's question, thank you for that as well that I just -- the Tlicho is a settled land claim area. They do have self-government. I would have to bring this forward to their respective government. If they have looking at housing units to be transferred, I would have to further those discussions with that appropriate government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1205-19(2):
SALE OF THE MACTUNG MINE

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le Presidente. I have one more question for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Would the Minister commit to share a copy of the draft agreement with Fireweed Zinc, a definitive agreement, with the Standing Committee on a confidential basis, before that's finalized. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, subject to there being any legal reason that I can't do that, I would not have a problem doing that on a confidential basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 731-19(2):
ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL FLOOD RISK
PLANNING AND EVACUATION
PROCEDURES FOLLOWING THE MAY 2022
HAY RIVER FLOOD, SEPTEMBER 2022

TABLED DOCUMENT 732-19(2):
2014 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HAZARD
IDENTIFICATION RISK ASSESSMENT,
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES, 2014

TABLED DOCUMENT 733-19(2):
ASSESSMENT OF CLIMATE CHANGE
IMPACTS ON INFRASTRUCTURE IN ALL
NWT COMMUNITIES, GOVERNMENT OF
THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, JULY
2021

TABLED DOCUMENT 734-19(2):
HIGHWAY DRAINAGE DESIGN
STANDARDS, ONTARIO MINISTRY OF
TRANSPORT, JANUARY 2008

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following documents: One, Analysis of Regional Flood Risk Planning and Evacuation Procedures following the May 2022 Hay River Flood. Two, 2014 Northwest Territories Hazard Identification Risk Assessment, Government of the Northwest Territories. Number 3, Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on Infrastructure in All NWT Communities, Government of the Northwest Territories. Four, Highway Drainage Design Standards Ontario Minister of Transport. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Tabling of documents. Member for Frame Lake.

TABLED DOCUMENT 735-19(2):
52ND DENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
RESOLUTION #22/23-013

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I wish to table the following document: It's a Resolution Number 22/23-013, 52nd Dene National Assembly, Subject: Keepers of the Water Resolution. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 56:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES HOUSING CORPORATION
ACT

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 56, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act to be read for the first time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 56, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories

Housing Corporation Act is deemed read for first time and is now ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Minister responsible for Justice.

BILL 57:
MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT 2022

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 57, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act 2022, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 57, Miscellaneous Statute Amendment Act 2022, is deemed read for the first time and is now ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 23, 29, 48, 52, and 53, Tabled document 723-19(2), with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. Committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 723-19(2), 2023-2024 Capital Estimates, with general comments, Legislative Assembly, Justice, and Municipal and Community Affairs. Merci.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will take a short recess and resume with the first item.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 723-19(2), Capital Estimates 2023-2024. Does the Minister of Finance have any opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am happy to present the GNWT's 2023-2024 Capital Estimates.

These capital estimates total \$328 million to support and continue infrastructure investment in our communities. Major highlights of the plan include:

- \$95.1 million for highways, winter roads, bridges and culverts. This includes funding of \$13.4 million for the Frank Channel Bridge, \$12 million for the Prohibition Creek Access Road, \$19.8 million for the advancement of the environmental and planning work for the Mackenzie Valley and Slave Geologic Province All-Season roads;
- \$45 million for various airport and runway projects under the Disaster Mitigation Adaption Fund, Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan, and the Department of National Defence; and
- \$42.9 million for renewable energy projects, including \$18 million for the Fort Providence Transmission Line, and \$6.7 million for planning the expansion of Taltson Hydro Electric System;
- \$32.6 million for planning and construction of long-term care facilities, health centres, improvements to health information systems services, biomedical equipment, including \$11.6 million for the health centre in Tulita and \$10 million for the wellness and recovery centre in Yellowknife;
- \$8 million for planning and construction of schools, including \$2 million to complete the work on the Mangilaluk School in Tuktoyaktuk and \$3.5 million to renovate and expand the Aurora College Western Arctic Research Centre warehouse; and,
- \$29 million in continued funding to support community governments with their infrastructure needs.

The overall capital spend is offset by a total of \$183.3 million in support from the federal government through various infrastructure programs, including:

- \$101.1 million from the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan;
- \$23.3 million from the National Trade Corridors Fund;
- \$20 million from the Department of National Defence;
- \$17.8 million from the Building Canada Plan;

- \$10.7 million from the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund; and
- \$10.2 million from other partnerships.

That concludes my opening remarks, Madam Chair. I would be happy to answer any questions Members may have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. We have agreed to begin with the general comments on the capital estimates. Do Members wish to make general comments before we consider the tabled document in detail? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess, in general, I support the new approach taken in these capital estimates to, you know, reduce the amount to what we were actually going to spend, and I note this has freed up quite a bit of room in our debt ceiling because we are not committed to borrowing the money for projects that, you know, seem to be completely behind schedule for a variety of reasons. But I just want to talk about the lack of information that I think is currently around all of our infrastructure and I believe it is information that would best be provided when we deal with the capital budget. For example, we don't know what our current infrastructure deficit is in the Northwest Territories other than it is far more money that we can afford. We don't publicly know what our five-year capital plan is and what projects we're building in the next five years. I suspect that document exists, but it is not a public document. We don't know how much specific projects are going to cost. You will hear me ask this a number of times as we review this, what is this road going to cost? What is this school going to cost? Also, not public information, and we are expected to approve that money over the coming days without actually being told that figure publicly.

The capital estimates don't provide an update on our deferred maintenance backlog other than we know it is also hundreds of millions of dollars that our assets are in need of desperate repair, and we consistently underfund repairing our assets.

I really believe we have, as the GNWT, have not done proper asset management. We have no idea of where or at what state all our assets are in and what's need of repair they are in other than we know it's hundreds of millions of dollars.

Getting into the weeds a little bit, I think it would be prudent to report how many of our assets have reached zero book value. And what I mean by that is that every time we build something, we amortize it over the expected

life cycle and I'm quite confident that the vast majority of our assets have reached zero book value, which would imply we're supposed to replace them but that's probably hundreds of millions of dollars that we also do not have to replace our infrastructure.

All around, we table this capital document and we get excited that we're going to spend a couple hundred million dollars building new things, but we don't really talk about the fact that we have billions of dollars of infrastructure across, you know, the government and, most importantly, probably the Power Corp has another couple billion dollars in need of replacement. If we look at the state of all our hydro, many of it, you know, long, long overdue for replacement. And none of that information comes with the capital budget. So we are asked to add more infrastructure to an ever-growing infrastructure deficit and an ever-growing maintenance backlog.

I know some work is being done on this, but ultimately I think you can look at a number of jurisdictions that publish much more detailed analysis of all their assets, all their infrastructure, much more detailed analysis of what they're building over the next 5, 10, 20 years with costing that is all public. That is not something we do. And I will have a number of questions on that, to make that information public, as we go through these capital estimates. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente. I do have some comments to make on the capital estimates, but I have one question for the Minister to start with.

Earlier in this sitting, there was some information tabled in the House about a special warrant, and that also included some information about what GNWT expects to be, perhaps most of, what's required for flood relief, and the total was, I think, \$174 million. So I know that this was unanticipated. We may be able to recover some of those costs, probably not all of them.

I'd like to know from the Minister what impact the Hay River flood relief and then the bigger issue of mitigation in the future, what impact that actually has on the operating surplus and the spending that's anticipated in the capital estimates. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Finance. The witnesses are in, or are you okay with answering this?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, let me try and answer it, and I am sure the Member will let me know if we need to bring the witnesses in. There are finance witnesses in the witness room.

Madam Chair, yes, it's 174 -- I don't have that number in front of me, but it does sound approximately correct from my recollection. But I think the question is really getting at what that does to our fiscal situation. And, yes, having an over hundred -- unexpectedly over \$100 million in costs associated with the floods takes out the surplus that we had been projecting for 2022-2023 and puts us into a situation where we are likely to be in a -- well, where we are expecting now to be in a deficit situation. So that does mean that we wouldn't be in compliance ultimately, if that's the case, with the Fiscal Responsibility Policy. However, you'll recall that there is a couple -- really, a period of two years of lag time to catch back up. So we may not -- it may actually not necessarily -- it means we don't have the surplus, but we may not be in noncompliance.

As for the longer-term projection, we are still expecting, because we do get a significant amount of that refunded by the federal government under the Disaster Assistance Policy, that does catch us back up. And so by 2023-2024, we would be back to anticipating a surplus in the amount of \$131 million. Again, given that we would be, you know, I'm expecting that we won't get the money for disaster assistance this fiscal, or certainly not the bulk of it, and so then we wind up catching back up.

There's also a significant amount of catchup happening under the territorial formula finance policy because of all the costs that provinces were paying out during COVID. That reflects in terms of what we then get under the TIF. So, yes, this year definitely is being impacted but we do catch up. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Can the Minister commit to provide some publicly-available information around these new projections that she has been talking about with regard to our finances and our fiscal situation resulting from the Hay River flooding? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, Madam Chair, I'm happy

to do that. We did do budget dialogues again this spring at which point we had an update for it at the spring period. But certainly a lot of the work to assist communities that were affected by the flood was taking place over the spring and summer. So those final numbers were coming in, and I am happy to get that information out again.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Does the Minister have a timeframe in mind for getting that information to us as Regular MLAs but also to the public? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, so, you know, there were updates that were provided back in, I believe August, when we were preparing for this session. As I said, numbers related to the information that was received through the spring and summer as flood remediation work was ongoing certainly were being updated through the course of time. All of the information does go into the main estimates documents. I can see if we can put some sort of package together, you know, more urgently than that, you know, without having anyone from the department here in front of me -- and even if they were here I don't know that I could say if it's tomorrow or the next day. But I realize that Members may want to have that information this session so we'll get something together.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate the commitment from the Minister and as much as I would like to see it, I think the public also needs to see this. So I'll take her commitment there.

I do want to make some remarks now. I do want to compliment the Minister for the new approach, limiting capital spending to the \$260 million cap that I think better reflects our ability to actually get money out the door. And I know that the department is also doing much better tracking of the reasons for carryovers and can then, you know, work towards trying to look at what the barriers are and how to change that. And I know that they've also got a procurement review underway which might allow us to do some of this work more quickly and retain more of the benefits.

But, Madam Chair, I'm going to take some of the credit, and I think the Regular MLAs are going to take some of the credit for this new capital approach, which the Minister made her statement yesterday in the House about this, when she tabled them. We have been on the Minister, as Regular MLAs, for the entire Assembly about the overbudgeting, the overspending on capital, overspending that I've raised, certainly overbudgeting and the amount of carryovers. So, you know, I have not voted in favour of a single capital budget in this Assembly, and I have raised these issues again and again and again. So I want to thank the Minister for listening and actually decreasing the envelope or putting a cap on capital spending. So that's the good news. The bad news is I still think you're spending on the wrong priorities. And all I have to do is turn to page 2 here, and the largest single key investment area in the entire budget, the highest amount, 30 percent on highways and roads. Why are we not spending 30 percent of our budget on housing? That should be the highest priority for this Assembly, not highways and roads in terms of capital investment. And it's no secret that I have never accepted a number of the large infrastructure projects as priorities. The Slave Geological Province Road -- I shouldn't have used that word -- is not a priority, especially at a time when the Bathurst caribou herd is in decline and a regional study is being discussed; we should not be spending money on something like that. I also disagree with Taltson Expansion. I don't think there's no buyer that's been identified. Without a buyer, there's no project. And I think we can make much better use of the funds that would be invested in that project to build community and individual homeowner energy self-sufficiency.

So I disagree fundamentally with Cabinet's spending priorities and as shown here, highways and roads highest item. So I will likely still vote against this budget but I want to thank the Minister for her efforts to decrease the overbudgeting on capital. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Are there any further questions, comments? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess this cautious approach, I guess, in spending in capital spending is interesting. But I guess what is concerning, I guess, to me, is that, you know, is that, you know, departments appear, I guess -- we know that they're unable to spend money -- spend the funding received from federal government to actually complete projects and, you know,

we're seeing important projects being pushed back. We're seeing possible, you know, maybe lapse of funding; I'm not sure. But does the Minister -- does this raise a concern, I guess, to the Minister because, you know, we look at less spending on capital, but have we looked at anything else to maybe encourage, say, securing contractors to come north, finding ways to, you know, entice workers to come north so that we can actually, you know, take these projects on and, you know, finish them with the money we have before we start losing it. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, this isn't just, to be clear, a function of the circumstances of the labour market shortages that all of Canada and the world are experiencing today. This is reflective of, you know, the last ten years that we saw that, you know, the average spend in the last ten years year over year is around \$250 million per year. So it's not new that we simply don't have the capacity in the North alone to be getting out to have much more than that spent in any particular given year. So it's not entirely a function of current labour market shortages. It is a function in part of general labour shortages in the North. You know, and to that I would say that over the course of that time, certainly before my time here or, you know, at the time of the 19th Assembly there have been efforts at increasing the population through, you know, various forms of recruitment. And they've also obviously not been successful. So, you know, I don't know that that alone is going to entirely solve the problem. I think there should be a broader look at increasing the population, increasing the economy, having a positive and pleasant and wonderful place to come and live and work as we all know it to be. Does that change the fact that for the last ten years or more the capital budget has been oversized relative to what we could perform? No, it doesn't. So fixing this problem doesn't mean we don't want to look at increasing the population. But I just want to kind of separate out that that isn't necessarily going to take away the reasons that we've done now what we've done now, which is to right size the capital plan, reduce the need to borrow, and to put money into planning. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess my concern is that, you know,

this government goes to the federal government and seeks funding for initiatives that we want to undertake. And now we have to go back to the federal government and tell them that we can't complete the work that we promised we're going to complete in a timely manner. So I guess I would ask the Minister does she see that as an impediment now to securing, you know, federal funding for the new initiatives? Because if we're not spending the money on what we're supposed to and finish those projects, is the government -- or does she think that the government's going to be a little more reluctant to fund our projects, and has she had actually any discussions with her counterparts? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, one of the sources of, you know, concern that's been raised has actually been colleagues in the federal government who have said, you know, why aren't you spending more? What are you spending? You know, and they want to have accountability for the dollars that they are committing to the Northwest Territories. So if there are projects that are delayed or stalled, again for a variety of reasons, but it may well -- but for whatever reason it may be that attaches to any particular project, you know, they would rather know that when we have a properly sized budget that they can then be held accountability to deliver upon and be more focused on the reasons that a project might get held back. So it's not to say that some of these projects won't still face some sort of delay but, you know, we're not looking at a monster-sized envelope that is more likely to see that.

Federal departments have been consulted, certainly a lot of officials-level conversations have been had. I know myself and Minister Archie have had conversations when the federal Minister of Infrastructure was here. And the messaging actually was, you know, figure out what you can do and to focus on that. So I actually think this will be a positive signal to them. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, again, you know, I've got a real concern because I look at, you know, some of the projects that are getting pushed back and just as an example, you know, the extended care facility in Hay River backed to 2027-2028, you know, and then I see that well,

they're going to reevaluate. Well, I'm not exactly sure what that means.

You know, we talk about -- you know, we've had flooding. We talk about dredging. And, you know, we're going to be looking for money for that. Are we going to get turned down because of our inability to -- you know, to complete what we're supposed to complete. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. I'll take that as a comment. Did you have any further questions for the Minister or any other comments?

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: That was just a comment.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions, comments? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. A couple questions: the reduction that you have here, we have got a total capital budget of \$328 million. In regards to my riding, this fiscal year with \$3.4 million for public housing repairs with no homeownership repairs in the communities, I am just wondering like, and my colleague, Mr. O'Reilly talked about the -- you know, the percentage in terms of highways and versus housing etcetera, my question to the Minister: is this budget here carved in stone, or can that be adjusted? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, this is the proposed capital budget. So that's -- it's before the House now for discussion, and, you know, that's exactly the point here. It's not approved before it's approved by this House. So, you know, that's precisely the discussions we are to be having over the next short while. Yes, thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Also during the budgeting process back in March of this year, there were some discussions that was happening in regards to monies made to a committee, about \$5 million worth to housing. I'm not really sure exactly, I've never seen no breakdown of this \$5 million as to where the money's going and who's getting this \$5 million. Can the Minister maybe just elaborate a little bit on that. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that the MLA is referencing discussions that were had between myself and colleagues on the other side when we were preparing the main estimates and passing the main estimates. And I certainly can, you know, provide -- I believe this information has been provided, but I'm happy to go through it again.

There were increases, at the conclusions of those discussions, made to various program budgets within Housing NWT. It was, I believe, \$6.6 million that was committed in addition, as part of the main estimates' discussions, to fund projects that are specifically directed where they -- money that goes out to constituents, goes out to residents. So, for example, you know -- I'm drawing a blank. But, you know, things where people can do their own constructions, they can do their own renovations, they can do their own upgrades, and that money has moved out \$4 million and then ongoing. So anyways, I certainly can provide confirmation of what's gone out one by one if that would be of assistance. Thank you.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. This year, when I went through the budget and went through the committees and we discussed it in the House here, at the end of the day I voted against the budget. And mainly because of there was really nothing there. We got rounded off to 2 percent of the overall budget that we got in my riding. And that's still concerning.

My question, again, to the Minister is that if this is not carved in stone and we could have further discussion on this, whether it would be highways being 30 percent and housing 11 percent, is there a way we could increase that so that we are really addressing the need of housing but yet still meeting the mandate of this government that was put forward in 2019, and that mandate overall?

But having said that, though, if that's an -- if we can look at that but at the same time it would be nice if we could start working the Indigenous governments because right now as it is, we're going to have to figure a way to do things better and maybe through a contribution agreement because right now there's still -- we're still dealing with all of the bureaucratic red tape in the government, and I just thought maybe we could maybe look at this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, I mean, as I said, certainly that's the point of bringing the matter here is for us all as an Assembly to have an opportunity to discuss how to spend the public dollars we are responsible for as a collective. And certainly, you know, some budgets could be adjusted, and maybe there is, you know, money made -- I know there's going to be probably requests to increase some areas. I would just sort of keep in mind, or urge people to keep in mind, that if we are increasing the overall plan, then we are again adding dollars into the plan that we know we will not spend all of that. We already -- over the last ten years have never spent anywhere near \$300 million, and this one already is over \$300 million. We will no doubt have some carryovers from that. So if there's requests to increase, then two things to be kept in mind: One, not all of it can be delivered upon. But two, it does mean we're then having to take on the debt to deliver it, particularly, you know -- well yes, we would have to take on the debt to deliver upon it and increase the borrowing plan, which puts us closer to the borrowing limit. So again, everything's to be discussed. But just to keep in mind what the consequences of those discussions are. Yes, thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. When I was elected back on February 10th of this year, two years earlier the GNWT went through -- elected all the MLAs for this Assembly, for the 19th Assembly, and they had a meeting where they brought all their wants and needs for their constituency and the NWT. When I came in, I never had that opportunity and I looked at some of the capital plans. So for N'dilo, Dettah, Lutselk'e, and Fort Resolution, we do have our own wants and needs as well. But I just want to -- we brought this issue to the Minister a few years ago with chief Marlowe, and he raised the issue in Lutselk'e in regards to the dust problem in that community. If there's a way we can look at that, either start developing some kind of chip seal program for that community so we could address the dust problem. And that dust problem's been there for a long time and hasn't been really addressed. And then that's the same thing in Fort Resolution, in the community of Fort Resolution. We should really take a look at doing a chip seal program in that community. And that's a concern. But overall, Madam Chair, if we could take a look

at this, then maybe I'll be in favour of voting in favour of this budget. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Are there any further general comments to the capital plan? Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, just in regards to, like my colleague, Mr. Johnson, I am liking the new format of the spending on our -- and I see so much that says Nunakput on it, so I'll be supporting this for sure. And it's good to see. But just a couple of questions I do have with the contracts that we do have out, the numbers I got start off with the Mangilaluk School.

We have a contract that's out. We asked for reports I guess, on who's hired, like for community, because I know there's not too many community hires in the community of Tuk. And it's all seems to be outsiders, so. And we asked for a plan, a scope, business scope for the project and we haven't received it yet from the contractors and it's been going on two years now. I just want to make sure that our government is making sure that they're staying on top of it in regards to getting that plan so my leadership could see it because my leadership's asking me the same thing. So I think if anything I know that the department did go into the community, but I know that they were busy taking a look at the site so they were too busy to meet with my leadership. So I think on the next go around, I think if they're able to come into the community to meet with my leadership through the mayor of Tuk and the hamlet, the community corporation, I think that would be a good thing just to try to work together because it's too big of a project in the middle of a community. It's a good project that's well needed, and -- but I think that has to be done.

Number two, the upgrades on the Tuk-Inuvik Highway. The upgrades that we have, how much -- you know, there's a couple of sections on there where it's flat for the permafrost. It's getting more dangerous. Frost heaves are coming up when it gets colder now; it just pops up out of nowhere. So we're looking at the cost -- how much it's going to cost our government and to make sure that they're, you know, talking with the contractors on that road to make sure that they're doing the sections that mostly needed for safety, public safety, and to keep that road upgraded for years to come.

And our liquefied natural gas. I see it in here for M18. From my understanding that M18 is being put into mitigation in regards to our

permission to go on Tuk 71A lands, which were -- our land claim is signed and you're on Tuk 71A lands as being the people of Tuk own that land and access to it -- access to that gas. I want to know where we're going with this in regards with my Minister in regards to seeing what's going to happen. Because if we're a land claim group, we already were signed since 1984. This is a good news story because one, we're going to -- we're going to service Inuvik with natural gas. We're not getting it all the way from BC. Safety aspects on the Dempster Highway. And it creates jobs for the community. But we have to find a way to get and push that issue in regards to making sure that M18 is a go and not being stalled like they did with the Mackenzie Valley pipeline. That's really -- for myself that's like a slap in the face as an Inuvialuit beneficiary that you're on our land. You want our -- and we're going to give you our gas? We're resource rich and cash poor. And our people, we have to work together as a government, with the Inuvialuit, as a community corporation, to get this project off and running in the right direction. So that's all I have to say. But thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. And just a reminder to all of the great comments, I hope you say them again when we have the Minister and the witnesses in front of us to bring those issues out and possibly get some more detailed answers.

I will go now to Member for Thebacha and then Deh Cho.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just believe that a balanced approach to budgeting is important. You can't have it all one way, though. It has to be kind of balanced because your outputs when you're doing business with people within the territory and you're working for the members of the NWT, there's so much lack of infrastructure in the tiny communities and regional centres that those cannot be ignored. And if there is not enough staff that are qualified to make sure those deadlines and those projects are completed, then what is happening? You know, we have all this staff per capita, with bureaucratic staff in the territories per capita, to other individuals in the territories, it's phenomenal. So actually, you know, you wonder how is this -- how is the thinking going -- you think about it, and in a business world that would never happen.

One of the things that I am very concerned about is the homelessness in Fort Smith. And it must be addressed. You know, we came up with an innovative idea of tiny homes for a pilot project so the person actually would have a

small home, that are homeless, and they take care of it and they look after it themselves. And those kind of ideas have got to be taken seriously. If you're just going to put them in another place where it's another burden to someone else, that's not going to build their esteem; that's not going to build them up to be a better person; it's not going to -- it's a really not a win-win situation. And I want the Cabinet and the Minister of Finance to rethink some of these issues.

And I think -- you know, and we talk about housing across the territories. I was able to visit a couple of communities this summer. You know, we went to a few and even in Lutselk'e, you know, you look around the community and, you know, you find the people very happy but, you know -- and with what -- with what they have. And, you know, compared to everywhere else, it's not enough. It's -- you know, you wonder how anyone could actually survive in a community where you don't have choices. And, you know, so we have to think a little bit differently because we serve a different population in the North. Where, you know, cost is phenomenal; you know, there's not a lot of infrastructure and people look forward to projects in their communities and in the regional centres, you know. And I am trying not to take away from Yellowknife. We're not trying to take away anything from here. Nothing shuts down here. But many times there are things that do shut down in our areas for lack of persistence from people who do not do their jobs in some offices. So I just want to make sure that, you know -- I like the balanced approach, but we also got to be very aware that in the business world, this would not take place, that you have the money, you spend the money, and you make money. You know, and if you don't start thinking in that way -- and, you know, I don't agree with some of my colleagues' aspects with regards to the Taltson Hydro Expansion. Yellowknife needs that Taltson Hydro Expansion; that's probably why it's going ahead. You know, Fort Smith is fine. But, you know, I'm very happy and I supported it 100 percent, 150 percent, 200 percent, because that's the way things are going in this world. And for greener energy, it's the perfect energy. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. General comments, Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Minister, it is noted here that highways and roads take up 30 percent, the largest chunk of the budget. I'm not sure what work this all entails but every year, we're fixing up

pretty much maybe same sections every year or every two years. I'm wondering -- you know, the reason I'm looking at this and if we -- and, you know, if someone could live with, if there were potholes for several years. Because the hamlet of Enterprise, it is the only community in the whole of the Northwest Territories, without a school. They've been asking, requesting for a school I think for over 15 years, 20 years, and recently, over the last couple years, year or so, all the documentation was lost. Enterprise is the first community coming into the Northwest Territories. And there's not much attention being given to the community -- the hamlet of Enterprise in terms of infrastructure. And a school is much needed in the community of this size to draw people to the community, you know, and then you can build capacity within. All they're asking for is an elementary school. You know, they have very many concerns about the extreme weather conditions that are happening lately, probably due to climate change, and they have a lot of young children, and mothers have to wake up early, you know, to prepare them for the bus. So there's a safety concern in all this.

The hamlet of Enterprise, we need to help them to grow, and that begins with a school. You know, I'm not -- we're not asking for much here. We're asking for consideration to get the groundwork going and maybe preplanning at this stage, which is not a lot. Like I say, somebody could live with a little bit of potholes for a year or two longer and we could make this a reality for the hamlet of Enterprise. And together as a government, we can see, watch as the community grows. So I really hope that you would make consideration for that as the Minister of Finance. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Are there any further general comments? So we'll move on to the detail. We'll proceed to the detail tabled document beginning with the Legislative Assembly. Speaker, does the Speaker wish to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Welcome. Mr. Speaker, would you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.: Thank you, Madam Chair. With me today we have our sergeant-at-arms, Brian Thagard. Also Kim Wickens, our deputy clerk, Members and precinct services.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee has agreed to forego general comments on this section. Is the committee agreed to proceed to the detail in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Okay, thank you. Committee, the Legislative Assembly begins on page 14, and we'll defer the Legislative Assembly totals and review the estimates by activity summary beginning at page 15, with the Office of the Clerk with information items on page 16. And I'm just going to remind Members that you have ten minutes to speak to the item if you wish to speak and to use your ten minutes if you're going to -- because I will not go back to the Member. So thank you.

Any questions on the Legislative Assembly? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks to our valued guests. So the information we've got here in the capital estimates are that this allocation of \$200,000 is for building accessibility upgrades. Can we just get some details of what's expected here? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good question there, Member for Frame Lake. The proposed upgrade is to ensure that accessibility for employees and members of the public is a priority in creating barrier-free washrooms. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks to the Speaker for that information. So when we say "barrier-free washrooms" is that just on this main floor, or is it throughout the building? And is it, like widening of doors, stalls; generally what kind of work is going to be done? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.: Thank you, Madam Chair. Some of the improvements that will be conducted are actually on both floors, which includes design features that convert the two existing non-accessible washrooms at the end of the executive hallway into full accessibility -- accessible facilities and to ensure sufficient space for the upgrades, two additional rooms in the immediate area,

janitor's closet, and Committee Room A storage room will be configured into new washroom spaces. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: No, thanks. I want to thank the Speaker and our staff for doing the work to plan for this. I support this expenditure money to make the building more accessible, and I think the Speaker's going to get off a little easy today. But appreciate the work, thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Are there any further questions, comments under Legislative Assembly? Seeing no further questions. I'll call it.

Legislative Assembly, office of the clerk, infrastructure investments, \$200,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Members. Please return now to the legislative summary found at page 14, Legislative Assembly, 2023-2024 Capital Estimates, \$200,000. Member for Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 297-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 723-19(2): CAPITAL
ESTIMATES 2023-2024 – LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY – DEFERRAL OF DEPARTMENT
(PAGE 14),
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Nothing about our guests at the table here, but I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The motion is on the floor and being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried. Thank you.

---Carried

Committee, does committee agree that we shall proceed now to the Department of Justice?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee, and thank you to Mr. Speaker and his witnesses. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the -- oh, yes, Mr. Speaker?

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR.: Sorry, Madam Chair. Just closing comments here. I'd like to thank the Members for their ongoing support. But seriously I'd just like to thank our witnesses, Ms. Wickens and also Mr. Brian Thagard, our sergeant-at-arms. This'll be his last budget he'll be presenting after 30-some odd years. So big hand of applause. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Committee, we will now consider the Department of Justice. Does the Minister of Justice wish to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Yes, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Welcome. Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have Charlene Doolittle, the deputy minister for the Department of Justice, and James Bancroft, the director of corporate services.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The committee has agreed to forego general comments. Is the committee agreed to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, the Department of Justice begins on page 60. We will defer the departmental totals and review the estimates by activity summary beginning at page 61, with Corrections, with information items on page 62. Questions, comments? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just looking at the line item for specialized courts and integrated case management services tenant improvements in Yellowknife. We're making some office improvements for integrated service delivery model. Can I just get a bit more explanation of what that is and what building that's in. Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, I'll just hand it to Mr. Bancroft. He has the details on this one.

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

MR. BANCROFT: Thank you, Madam Chair. To answer the Member's question about the location of the building, currently it's in what's been known as the old highways building in Yellowknife and on the main street. And the details about the tentative improvements is to make the space for useable for the program that's operating in there, that being integrated case management and the specialized courts.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Do we have a total cost for that project? Just concerned about how much money we're putting into what I assume is a Northview building. Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So as I understand it, the costs aren't laid out in the capital estimates. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Can someone tell me who owns that building, Madam Chair?

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I don't -- I'm not sure who the owner of that building is, thank you. But we can find out and get that information to the Member. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you for that commitment. Can the Minister confirm that he will publicly provide that information. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sorry, can you repeat your question.

MR. JOHNSON: I got a commitment there to find out who's -- well, some undisclosed amount of money into someone's building that we don't own. But I'm wondering if we can get the commitment that we will publicly tell us

what owns this building for the undisclosed amount of money. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have no problem disclosing who the building owner is. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions, comments under this section?

All right, so please return now to the departmental summary found on -- I just about missed the budget line. All right, so Justice, corrections, infrastructure investment, \$1,480,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Members. Please return now to the departmental summary found on page 60, Justice, 2022-2023 Capital Estimates, \$1,480,000. Mr. O'Reilly.

COMMITTEE MOTION 298-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 723-19(2): CAPITAL
ESTIMATES 2023-2024 – JUSTICE -
ASSEMBLY – DEFERRAL OF DEPARTMENT
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CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Did we skip court services and services to the public? Okay, 2023-2024. Got it.

Madam Chair, I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Justice at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The motion is on the floor and being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Thank you. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee, and thank you to the Minister. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the Minister from the Chamber. Or, the witnesses. Remove the Minister. Take them all out. I don't have that authority, no.

Does the committee agree to proceed to the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Does the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs wish to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

Thank you. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, would you please introduce your witness.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: On my left is deputy minister Gareau.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Welcome. The committee has agreed to forego general comments. Is the committee agreed to proceed to the detail in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs beginning on page 68. We will defer the departmental totals and review the estimates by activity, beginning at page 69, with the regional operations with information items on page 70.

Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations, infrastructure investments, \$29,160,000. Any questions, comments? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I see there's \$29 million here, and it's going to 33 communities. We list all the communities on page 70 but we don't say how much they're getting. Is the Minister willing to provide public breakdown about how much each of these communities is getting? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes.

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

MR. JOHNSON: That makes me very happy. Wow, I don't even -- I had a whole line of other questions.

Okay, I guess my next question is this is money provided for capital under the funding formula. I see it's \$29 million here. If we were following -- if we had the money to commit what's in the formula, how much money would actually be here, aka, what's the deficit shortage? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So my understanding the gap's about \$20 million.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know that we provide this money and then we're working with a number of communities to provide asset management plans, and they're all kind of in a different stage of doing that, or hopefully -- I think a few will have complete planning done. I'm just wondering if that's a requirement of the funding or whether we are, yeah, requiring all communities to have asset management plans done. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

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

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you. As a condition of the community public infrastructure funding that you see in today's capital estimates, MACA does require that all community governments develop a five-year capital plan, and we work with them on that development. As part of that, we also do require asset management plans, recognizing that community governments are in various stages of completion of those plans. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, I'm glad to hear that, and I think asset management planning's important. I think it's a little ridiculous that we require our community governments to do it and we do not have an asset management plan. If you looked at GNWT, we'd be in about step negative 100 of asset management planning; step one being figuring out how much you actually own. But I'm glad we're requiring our communities to do that. Maybe one day we will do it.

I guess I want to go to another issue I have with the way we do our budgeting and see if MACA will comment.

I can go to -- well, I'm looking at the town of Inuvik's five-year capital plan, and it tells me what they're going to spend every five years. You know, I can see that they're spending \$70,000 in 2023 on a motor control panel replacement. The GNWT doesn't provide this information because it says it affects procurement. Have we told the town of Inuvik

or any other municipalities that they probably shouldn't publish this information because it's going to affect their tenders? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So, again, the Member's got the town of Inuvik's plan. That's their plan, and that's how they're doing it and how they're providing that information. The information that we're going to give to the Members, it's for them. Like, it's for their -- it's not for public consumption. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Sorry, perhaps I need to get a clarification there. Is the Minister willing to publicly provide how much each community is getting under the funding we are seeing here? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Okay, so the amount we're giving the communities, yes. The community plans, no. Those plans belong to the communities. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I'll sneak one more in here which is this is the capital funding we give communities. I know we also give them operations funding and water and sewer. Does this mean that we are now going to provide a breakdown by community for each of the three funding groups publicly? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I want to say no but yes, we will.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Well, while the Minister's on a roll here, so I, you know, on page 69, large capital projects, it was \$31.5 million in 2021-2022 and it's gone down now to \$29 million. And, of course, the cost of living's actually gone up. So can someone explain to me the decline in funding here to our communities? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

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

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy minister.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. So what you're seeing, that \$31.5 million in 2021-2022, that was provided via supplementary funding. So in that fiscal year, community governments received their \$29 million base funding and then an additional \$2.4 million in supplementary funding, which was part of the reducing the municipal funding gap. That additional \$2.4 million continues to be provided to community governments but it's actually included in MACA's main estimates. We have a budget line in our main estimates called community government mandate funding, and it's part of that funding. That number in our main estimates is made of the additional funding provided to community governments for capital, which is around the \$2.4 million plus O and M money plus water and sewer money. So it's just a breakdown of where that money is reflected. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks for that explanation. So, yeah, I get that. The last time I looked, I think the consumer price index for Yellowknife was about 7.8 percent or something. And I don't know what it is across the NWT. But, you know, I just don't see any allowance here for any kind of an increase for community governments in terms of inflation. No forced growth. How does the department ensure then that the communities are able to, you know, use -- or, you know, make up the -- provide the programs and services and do the infrastructure replacement if the money that they get from MACA's not increasing? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So we do have staff that works with the municipalities. We help them with the plan, see where their challenges are, and see how we can help them move forward. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Okay, so where are we at with calculating a new

version or figure for the municipal funding gap and actually addressing that? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

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

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. So MACA is currently working with the NWT Association of Communities and the local government administrators of the NWT on updating the four main community government funding policies. As part of that process, MACA has committed to provide each community government with a breakdown for their individual department of the quantum of the municipal funding gap and where that gap is, if it's O and M, if it's water/sewer, if it's capital.

The reason we've committed to that is, as Minister Thompson was saying earlier, because it's a good planning tool and it's helpful for community governments to have that information so that they can plan and budget accordingly, and then MACA's able to support them in that process. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I agree that that would be really helpful for the communities to individually have it. It also would be helpful for MLAs to have in terms of making sure that we get as much money as we can into MACA to get it out to the communities again. So is that sort of information going to be available publicly? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So we can share it with committee. But, again, right now it's with the communities. It'll be with the communities. And how they share it, it's up to them. But we're willing to work with committee to get that information, and if the NWTAC says yeah, we want to make it public, then we're good with it. But, again, we need to work with our municipalities with this. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, okay, thanks. Yeah, I appreciate the commitment there from the

Minister to share it with us, and then work with NWTAC. And I don't see any reason why this couldn't or shouldn't be made public. But I'm sort of thinking of some kind of a public dashboard that, you know, could get updated at least once a year. But, okay.

Lastly, I know my colleague asked about the asset plans. How many asset plans have actually been finished for community governments? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So we don't have that detail. I'll have to get back to committee. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks for that. I guess I'm trying to find a way to talk about this, because I know what the number is, but let's just say it's significantly less than the number of communities that are outlined on page 70, from what I understand. So if, you know, a significant number of communities don't have completed asset plans, and that's my understanding, how do we actually know what the municipal funding gap is and how do we, you know -- how do we get every community to have a community asset plan? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, so -- yes, we're working with the communities to get their asset plan in place. But, again, we're working with them. And we had COVID. I can tell you that right now when I was working -- dealing with one of my communities they talked about their asset plan, the problem was is that we couldn't get staff in there to do the work. So our staff are starting to work with the municipalities to address this very concern, and we're willing to move forward. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. Okay, I'll just make a suggestion to the Minister, that if he needs some extra money to kind of get this work done quickly so that all the asset plans are done, you know, within a reasonable period of time, I'd be happy to support that as a supplemental appropriation, because we need that information to calculate and track what the municipal funding gap is. If communities and MACA don't know what their assets are, how do you know what the gap is?

So is that something the department is prepared to look at, is what it would take to get this work done a little more quickly than the pace that it seems to have happened at. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So it is one of our priorities to get done, and we're working with NWTAC on that. But for clarity on how the process is done, I'll turn to the deputy minister with your permission, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. As Minister Thompson said, we are working with the NWTAC on asset management planning. It's a concern of community governments as well as the NWTAC board.

In terms of, you know, how the lack of asset management plans relates to the mandate funding gap, we do have considerable amount of asset management data. We used it for our 2014 municipal gap review. We get -- so the community governments belong to a common insurance company called Norsix. They share their insurance data with us. You know, it's a big piece of their work to make sure all of their assets are insured. We have that data. We have a lot of data from, you know, pre-new deal on the nature and level of assets.

For those communities where we don't have a complete listing, you know, we do have regional staff who are aware of communities and are aware of what assets are in place in each community. So that is how we've worked with the NWTAC to quantify the asset management gap, using data from community governments and own source. So we're certainly on that. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Look, if you guys need some extra money to get this work done by hiring a few consultants to go in and work with communities to get inventories done, please do it, bring it forward in a supplementary appropriation so we can get this done quick. Thanks, Madam Chair. That's all I have.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess my first question is your community governments share a capital formula funding

and your municipal funding gap, are they based on need or per capita?

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Based on both.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: So if you really want to think out of the box, Madam Chair, I think the Minister has to clarify what he just said because, you know, when you have a city of Yellowknife at a \$58 million surplus and rising taxes for the residents, because I had a lot of people from Yellowknife tell me that the taxes were risen quite -- there was a big rise in taxes here, obviously the capital isn't suffering.

Whereas on the other hand, if you really want to address the municipal funding gap and the capital formula funding for communities and regional centres, we've got to reverse the way we think. And sometimes it takes a lot of leadership in order to make proper right decisions to address some of those gaps. And I just want to know how if the Minister is willing to think out of the box and show some leadership with regards to these gaps? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So we're working with NWTAC, as I said previously. We're also working with our three -- or our other two territorial governments, Nunavut and the Yukon, to reach out to the federal government to talk about this. We're working collaboratively with NWTAC and their sister organizations on a plan we're trying to address. And when we look outside the box and inside the box, we are making the commitment to have four programs or policies that we have and they're going to be done this fiscal year. So it's going to be done, prepared, and working with them. So we are addressing this. We have 33 communities, and we're working with them to make sure that their needs are met where we can. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Well, 32 communities are waiting for a more -- to fill the gap, Madam Chair. And I want to know how the Minister is going to address that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. As I said before, we're working with NWTAC and working with the municipalities, we're fixing the policies. And as we moved forward, we're also reaching out to the federal government. So we got a number of prongs moving forward to address this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. 32 communities are not at this table to vote for this budget, though. Okay. It comes through us that -- and we represent the people out there. And, you know, I just want to make sure that those gaps are looked at seriously because when you go around the communities and regional centres, there's a lot of infrastructure that is lacking. The municipal funding gap is there in those 32 communities, and I want to know how you're going to address that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I don't know how to make it any clearer. We're working with NWTAC. We're working -- so that's 33 communities there. We are working to fix the policy. The policies -- the four policies will be going to committee. Committee will have that opportunity to look there. We're also looking to the federal government to see if they are able to help us. I have -- we've reached out to the two territorial Ministers already. We've had conversations. And, again, as I said, we're working with NWTAC and they're working with their sister organizations so we can work collaboratively to be able to address this. This is just not an NWT issue. It is also a Nunavut and Yukon, and so we're trying to work together with that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: I don't have any further questions; I don't get a direct answer anyways. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Any further questions under this? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to read something out here from the information we got. It says here the department's responsible for the development and maintenance of community governments

responsive -- and responsible to the residents with sufficient legal authority and resources to carry out community responsibilities to provide their public programs and services essential to good community life and to deal effectively with other governments and organizations. The department is also responsible for protecting interests of consumers.

Madam Chair, I guess what I'm looking for is that -- I just want to go the issue of flooding and MACA's I guess response in how they're dealing with that in terms of mitigation and how that's going to be funded, how those mitigation measures will be funded for the community of Hay River, hopefully prior to, you know, next season to avoid any -- you know, any -- yeah, any other flooding, at least severe flooding. So, you know, what's -- I guess what are they doing, and have they identified any money for a capital budget? Because there will be, you know, berms and different initiatives that are going to be required to provide those mitigation measures. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So we've identified \$175 million for the recovery. Part of that is with mitigation. We're also working with the federal government to see what they are able to provide us, and we're also working with other funding sources -- or trying to find other sources to address this. So as I said on the floor today, we're working with the federal government, we're working with the town, we're working with the K'atlodeeche First Nations. So we're working together with them. But we also have to work with the federal government to be able to provide funding to us towards that. So the mitigation, again, the Town of Hay River's come to us with a list. We've reached out to the federal government. We're working with the federal government on that. We're also -- as I said, we have -- we set out a budget of \$175 million approximately for this flood recovery for the town of Hay River and K'atlodeeche First Nation. And so we have money right now. And as for the mitigation part, the funding we're trying to find other sources as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I appreciate that answer. I guess when it comes to mitigation, can you give me a sense, I guess, when you're talking about mitigation, exactly what it entails. Are we just talking about mitigation for the, you know, for the homeowner, like lifting their homes? Or are

we talking something wider, like I say, berming and the -- maybe the buy back of land, those type of things? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So yes, so it's a long list. If the committee wants it, we can provide that list. There's -- like, there is -- everything the Member talked about is part of it. It's lifting homes, moving infrastructure within the homes up to another floor, looking at, you know, buy back of land and other items as well. So if that's what we have to do, then that's part of the mitigation plan process. So there is a long list and if the Member wishes to see the long list -- it's not exhaustive. It could be -- again, we could provide you what we have. But there could be exemptions or other stuff that we haven't thought about, and as we move -- it's a living document so it could be added. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I appreciate that. And I would like to see that list in case I can add anything to it because, you know, when we talk mitigation, you know, we're talking about within the boundaries of Hay River and K'atloodeche First Nation. But there's also things that we possibly could be doing outside that -- those boundaries. So that's kind of what I'm looking for, is making sure that the department is doing a -- you know, an all-encompassing assessment of how to mitigate any future damage. So, yeah, I guess I'll have further conversations with the Minister on this anyways. So I guess that's more of a comment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Are there any further comments under the Municipal and Community Affairs? Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, it would have been nice to have seen the numbers since the formula is based on per capita and needs. And, you know, like I've said it before, in my region alone, you know, like we have a lot of aging infrastructure. Our water pipes need to be replaced. So we have a lot of buildings that are aging that needs attention as well. And it would be nice to see, you know, the numbers, how much money is going spend -- going to be spent in my region based on per capita. There's over 2,000 people in my region alone, and in Behchoko alone is 1,900. And the

smallest community is less than 200. So it would be nice to see the numbers so that -- so we can share this with our leaders. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: The same thing with YK North, we'll give you the information. We'll provide that information to you. You will have it. And it can be made public. As I told the Member previously, yes, there's aging infrastructure. Municipal governments makes decisions on their capital plan. They make decisions, and we support their decisions on how we do it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Yes, I understand about that being part of a community government council, yes, I do -- I do understand about how that we can -- you know, how to -- how to spend the money, where to spend the money. But I'm just saying that right now that in my region we have major infrastructure issues. And it's -- even to change the waterline that's aging especially in Edzo that's connected to the school, you know, that's going to cost, like, over \$10 million. And I don't know -- like, that's why I'm saying it would be nice to see the numbers, like, how much money will be allocated to my region. And it says here regional operations \$29 million. So -- and it's going to 33 communities. That's why I -- it would be nice to see -- would have been nice to see the actual number. But it's good that he's going to provide it to us, so thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: And I apologize if the -- since this Member isn't going to be there, we'll make sure this is, again, for future, this will be provided in every capital plan so people are aware and so they have opportunities to look at it before us being in front of the committee. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further comments under Municipal and Community Affairs?

Seeing none, Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations, infrastructure investments, \$29,160,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Members. Please return now to the department summary found on page 68, Municipal and Community Affairs, 2022-2023 Capital Estimates, \$29,160,000. Member for Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 299-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 723-19(2): CAPITAL
ESTIMATES 2023-2024 – MUNICIPAL AND
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS– DEFERRAL OF
DEPARTMENT (PAGE 68),
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is on the floor and being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee, and thank you to the Minister. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witness from the Chamber. What's the wish of committee? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente, I move that the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): There's a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: May I please have the report of Committee of the Whole? Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 723-19(2), 2023-2024 Capital Estimates. I would like to report progress, with three motions carried, and Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Nunakput. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): Orders of the day for Thursday, October 20th, 2022, 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
 - Oral Question 1163-19(2), Homelessness
 - Oral Question 1188-19(2), Memorandum of Understanding with the Canadian Red Cross
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
 - Motion 62-19(2), Reappointment and Appointment of Human Rights Commission Members
 - Motion 63-19(2), Reappointment of Human Rights Adjudication Panel Members
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

18. First Reading of Bills

19. Second Reading of Bills

- Bill 56, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act
- Bill 57, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022

20. 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 48, Arbitration Act
- Bill 52, Elevators and Lifts Act
- Bill 53, An Act to Amend the Liquor Act
- Committee Report 33-19(2), Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report on Bill 52, Elevator and Lifts Act
- Committee Report 34-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Ombud
- Tabled Document 723-19(2), 2023-2024 Capital Estimates

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, October 20th, 2022, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:20 p.m.