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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, November 1, 2022****Members Present**

Hon. Diane Archie, Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, 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

DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms. Lesa Semmler):

Welcome, colleagues. First of all, I just want to welcome the grade 6 class from William McDonald here today. I got a quick introduction to them, and they may not be here when we do Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Ministers' statements. Minister for Health and Social Services.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 285-19(2):
SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS
REVIEW**

HON. JULIE GREEN: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services is reviewing the supplementary health benefits available to NWT residents. These benefits cover prescription drugs for approximately 1,500 residents, benefits that go beyond coverage provided by the NWT Health Plan. Unfortunately, these programs are not currently available to everyone, so we are now updating policies that underpin this program.

To access the Supplementary Health Benefits Program, you must be a senior or have a specified disease named on a list of conditions developed more than 30 years ago. The seniors program remains unchanged. Our current focus is on replacing the specified conditions program with one that provides more people with coverage. The specified disease conditions program discriminates against residents based on their diagnosis rather than their need for help to pay for medication. We want everyone to have access to benefits, and we know that some people can afford to pay a portion of the costs. We also know that some medication is very expensive. We are working to find the balance where we can provide benefits to more people by having those with the financial means to pay to do so, without creating hardship.

Madam Speaker, there are 2,200 people in the territory who do not have benefits through work, non-insured health benefits or Metis health benefits. We know that some of the residents do not get prescriptions filled because they can't afford them. As a result, they end up accessing the healthcare system when their needs become urgent. The change in policy will enable residents to access the medication they need when it is prescribed and before a trip to the emergency room or doctor becomes necessary.

Madam Speaker, recognizing that medication can be very expensive, we have already made changes to existing programs to enhance sustainability. We introduced the Lowest Cost Equivalent Policy which specifies that the Extended Health Benefits Program covers the lowest cost alternative drug in generic brands. We also put in place the Long-Term Dispensing Policy that requires certain medications be dispensed as a 100-day supply therefore reducing the number of dispensing cycles. We launched the Biosimilar Policy in 2021 to switch patients from biologic drugs to their biosimilar versions. All of these initiatives have reduced the cost of the department's supplementary health benefits programs. Work continues to identify further administrative improvements that will make them more sustainable. We are acutely aware of the continually rising costs of healthcare overall.

Madam Speaker, the proposal we have put forward for public engagement is based on what we have learned from research on benefits programs across Canada. The NWT is one of the only places in the country that does not have a government funded benefit program for low-income residents. It is time to change that.

We are proposing that residents with low income have access to the same suite of benefits as residents who are eligible for the federal non-insured health benefits and Metis health benefits programs. Benefits available under these programs are covered at no cost to those eligible for them. Residents above the

low-income threshold will be required to pay for their drugs on a scale rising with income level until maximums are reached. When costs are maxed out, the GNWT will pay for the drugs required by residents.

We have posted a discussion paper outlining the proposed changes online for review and feedback, as well as sample scenarios and frequently asked questions. We have developed an online calculator to help residents understand how the proposed changes may affect them. We have met with interested parties, and we are planning to host a virtual town hall in mid-November where the public can ask more questions and provide feedback.

It is important for residents to make us aware of their many unique circumstances and nuances. We have been getting a lot of feedback so far. Keep it coming. We are learning a lot and your responses have been extremely valuable. For example, through the engagement we have learned more about the need for coverage of medical equipment and supplies. We want to create the program that best represents peoples' needs. We will continue to accept feedback until November 23.

Madam Speaker, by embracing this important work we are taking care of those who do not currently have access to supplementary health benefits. We are working to ensure all residents have consistent access to medication without a financial barrier.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister of Infrastructure.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 286-19(2):
ARCTIC ENERGY ALLIANCE 25TH
ANNIVERSARY

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Arctic Energy Alliance 25th Anniversary. Madam Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to increasing the use of alternative and renewable energy, stabilizing the cost of power, and supporting national and global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There are projects and initiatives the GNWT is leading that will help us meet these objectives, like the proposed Fort Providence to Kakisa transmission line and our efforts to make biomass the main heating source for GNWT buildings.

We also need action at the community level. That means residents, businesses, and communities across the territory taking steps to reduce their own energy costs and increase the use of alternative and renewable energy in their homes and office building.

Madam Speaker, for 25 years the Arctic Energy Alliance has been providing that support at the community level. The Arctic Energy Alliance is a non-profit society, which is funded by the GNWT, dedicated to reducing the costs and climate impacts of energy use in the Northwest Territories by providing programs and services. Madam Speaker, back in 1997, when the organization was created, their primary focus was to be able to provide energy education and awareness, energy audits for buildings, and renewable energy initiatives. The Arctic Energy Alliance continues to deliver these programs and has broadened their suite of programs and services over the past 25 years. The organization now provides even more options for residents, businesses and communities to save on energy costs and become more energy efficient.

The organization has offices in all six regions here in the Northwest Territories. This allows the Arctic Energy Alliance to maintain a close connection to communities throughout the NWT and establish important relationships and partnerships at the community level.

Madam Speaker, this work is having a positive impact. Since 2011, the Arctic Energy Alliance's building energy retrofit programs have resulted in combined annual savings of \$2.4 million in energy costs. The Alliance is also a key organization in helping communities develop energy planning in the NWT.

In 2020, the organization launched a pilot Electric Vehicle Rebate Program to help residents in hydro zones reduce the cost of transportation. In 2021-2022, the Arctic Energy Alliance invested approximately \$5 million into various programs and services. Of this \$5 million, \$2.7 million is core funding provided by the GNWT and \$1.7 million is provided through our agreement with Canada for the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund. While this agreement is set to expire at the end of the 2023-2024 fiscal year, talks have already commenced with Environment and Climate Change Canada to renew this important funding. The remaining \$0.6 million comes from various sources, including AEA membership as well as one-time GNWT funding. This investment resulted in significant dividends for the territory; 2,802 incentives given out, representing \$1.8 million in direct

savings for residents. This investment supported small communities, Madam Speaker, with over half the funding going to communities outside of Yellowknife. This also translated into greenhouse gas emission reductions of 1 kilotonne for the NWT - the equivalent of converting a third of the power generation for Tuktoyaktuk to renewable electricity, and 1,800 megawatt hours in energy savings.

Madam Speaker, in 2018 the GNWT released the 2030 Energy Strategy, our long-term approach in supporting secure, affordable and sustainable energy in the NWT. The Arctic Energy Alliance's programs and services are central to meeting our objectives of increasing the share of renewable heat in buildings to 40 percent and increasing energy efficiency by 15 percent by 2030.

Congratulations to the Arctic Energy Alliance on a quarter century of providing important energy programs and services in the NWT. I look forward to what the next 25 years will bring to the organization here in the Northwest Territories. Quyananni.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister for Environment and Natural Resources.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 287-19(2):
SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Madam Speaker, this government works to support Northerners who want to get out on the land and participate in the traditional activities as part of sustainable livelihoods. Since marking the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in September, I have thought about our efforts to promote sustainable livelihoods and support residents of the Northwest Territories, and the mandate commitments of this government all serve to create a critical mass that builds bridges and strengthens partnerships.

Northerners, and particularly Indigenous peoples, have important connections to the land, water, forests and wildlife, which have supported culture, traditions, knowledge, and way of life for generations. Today, I would like to share some of our collaborative efforts with communities, Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations, and other co-management partners to support sustainable livelihoods in the Northwest Territories.

Madam Speaker, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources supports a wide range of programs that promote on-the-land activities, country food harvesting,

and traditional economy. The Take a Family on the Land Program provides funding to help people take part in on-the-land activities such as hunting, fishing, camping, and sharing Indigenous knowledge. This new program is designed to be accessible for diverse families. The first year of the program was very well received, with 29 applications funded. This winter the program will be providing \$75,000 to applicants from across the territory.

Recently, the department expanded its Hunter Education Program to provide a new credit course for high school students. ENR worked closely with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to develop and pilot the new course in nine schools earlier this year. Both departments are pleased to announce that the course is now available across the NWT and will help students connect with and learn from local harvesters.

A new kind of program was developed to help support land-based healing by learning traditional trapping skills. This past February, ENR worked with the Department of Justice to offer a pilot in trapper training at the North Slave Correctional Centre. The pilot was so successful that it has been offered as a regular program as of June 2022.

The department is also looking for opportunities to provide equipment and support to participants so they can continue trapping after release. This is more than just a one-time course for inmates. It is a chance to learn traditional skills and make real change in their life and in their communities.

In addition to these new programs, ENR continues to deliver a number of core programs that support on-the-land activities. A major review of the Community Harvester Assistance Program, or CHAP, was recently completed and the work has begun to implement all eight recommendations from the What We Heard report. A final report on the CHAP review will be released in December 2022. A review of the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program is underway and expected to be completed in spring 2023. The Hunters and Trappers Disaster Compensation Program will also be updated this winter.

Madam Speaker, we know that some traditional harvesters were impacted by the extreme floods we saw across the NWT in the spring of 2021 and 2022, damaging cabins and equipment that they rely on to hunt and trap. The Hunters and Trappers Disaster Compensation Program was there to help folks get back on the land to harvest. In 2021-2022, approximately \$346,000 was paid to 38 harvesters to help them with recovery.

So far this year, approximately \$115,000 has been provided, with more claims anticipated.

This government recognizes the importance of Indigenous knowledge as an equal measure with scientific knowledge to guide our environmental research and monitoring and management programs. Community-based monitoring, developing an Alberta-NWT traditional knowledge framework for the transboundary water monitoring, boreal caribou range planning, and a new berry expert committee, are just a few examples of programs underway.

Elders, land users, and other Indigenous knowledge-holders contribute valuable information to support the NWT's environmental co-management system and inform the ongoing work across the government.

Madam Speaker, we have seen success in working with Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations, and individual harvesters across the NWT. However, we all can agree that there is more work to do. This government will continue to invest and deliver programs that help Indigenous peoples in the North get out on the land, practice traditional activities, and support sustainable livelihoods. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Member's Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1260-19(2): SENIORS' HOUSING

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, Hay River has an increasing seniors' population and there is a need for new multi-residential barrier-free housing in Hay River. As it stands now, in Hay River we currently we have two senior complexes, with a combined count of approximately 33 units. Madam Speaker, Riverview Lodge, a seniors' complex in Hay River, is nearing its end-of-life, and there appears to be no immediate plan on the books to replace it.

Last February, the Minister responsible for Housing NWT stated that, and I quote: "The corporation anticipates being able to operate this facility for at least another five years."

The Minister further stated that, "Housing Corporation...is also in process of completing a comprehensive technical assessment of the Riverview Lodge seniors' complex to plan for

its eventual replacement in the near future capital plan."

Madam Speaker, knowing this, along with the pace at which this government moves, I am looking to Housing NWT, if not already started, to start the process of developing a plan to replace Riverview Lodge with a multi-residential building. This building will go on what is known as the Disneyland site in Hay River. And in the process, because of location, I will be requesting that the existing Riverview Lodge property be considered for future multi-residential senior housing as well.

Madam Speaker, this is not a complicated issue. The need for senior housing is there; the vacant land is there; the tenants are available; and what we now need is a plan from Housing NWT.

Madam Speaker, I will stop here and will have questions for the Minister responsible for Housing NWT. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Member for Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1261-19(2): EDUCATION SYSTEM

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mahsi, Madam Speaker, modernizing the Education Act is a big undertaking. It is ensuring we meet the needs of our students and communities. The change it can bring is powerful and will influence our society. Madam Speaker, when the Minister of ECE proposes a two-phased approach to changing the Education Act, I cannot help but think still separate, still unequal.

Madam Speaker, I truly hope we are not dealing with continuing the segregation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous education. It pains me to think this way. It pains everyone who knows about residential schools and may hurt our family members who have seen segregation firsthand. Madam Speaker, let me use an analogy.

Let's imagine that each phase is a school bus. Bus 1 picks up people, but it only picks up the people that it wants. The only people that are allowed on the bus are from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Indigenous people are simply left on the side of the road asking for a ride. The Minister reasoning, we got to get this done fast, before the end of the 19th Legislative Assembly. Bus 2 will pick up everyone, but we do not know when this bus will leave or if it will ever leave.

The Minister says that phase 2 will happen but he does not have the authority to commit to anything past the life of this Legislative Assembly. There should be only one bus. This is the right thing to do and the right way to work. I find it insulting to hear the Minister say we do not have time to work with Indigenous governments when, in fact, they are very important partners in the work that we do. Some of the concerns that I have with the proposed Phase 1 are the following:

1. We do not know what the proposed changes are and we have been provided no details on those changes.
2. I fail to understand how the proposed administrative changes, like definitions, are going to improve student outcomes like reading levels.

Madam Speaker, can I have unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

3. ECE plans to clarify, ministerial powers as part of phase 1. These changes are not simply administrative changes; they are governance changes.

Madam Speaker, the Minister needs to table legislation soon, but he says he does not know what changes he is making or what the legislation will look like. No wonder Indigenous governments are distrusting and feel like the Minister is hiding something. Madam Speaker, the Minister refers to the What We Heard report. He is going to say everyone was consulted.

It is clear from the letters the Minister received from Indigenous governments that they feel like they have not been consulted or that they have been heard. The Education Act has not been changed in over 30 years. If this is very important work has to spill over into the 20th Legislative Assembly, then so be it. I say it is better to do things right not fast. Madam Speaker, Indigenous governments are on the second bus, sitting in the back. This looks like segregation, not reconciliation. Taking the time to do this right is very important. Madam Speaker, the two-phased approach is divisive. It recalls the past which was guided by privilege and racism and ended in deep segregation and suffering.

Madam Speaker, this two-phased approach is disrespectful of our treaties and agreements. It will affect government-to-government relations.

Madam Speaker, no one wants to disrupt our students' path to learning. We want to address

the colonial legacy and improve the education system together. Our elders have always taught us we must act collectively in unity and collaboration to achieve big things. And I say, "Nothing about us without us"

Madam Speaker, let us not send the wrong message. Let us correct this immediately and work in Phase 1 together. We need a path that shows we can do things together - To find this path together is what we owe our children. Mahsi, I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1262-19(2):
NEW AURORA COLLEGE CAMPUS ON TIN
CAN HILL

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the North is famous for our love of unique place names and Tin Can Hill is no exception. This beloved green space, located behind Rat Lake, is celebrated by new and long-term residents alike. It is where the snowmobile trail gets you out of the city, down to the lake, and across the bay in the winter. It was where the boats from across the lake would dock to resupply the town and where you can see evidence of our rich mining history at the old Con Mine. On Tin Can Hill, you can play and explore and walk on the 2.7-billion-year-old volcanic rock that underlies our town. It's where the city's folks run, walk, or bike extensive trail loops while conveniently remaining within the city. And recently the city and ECE decided it would be a good place for the new Yellowknife campus of the polytechnic university.

Madam Speaker, I understand why ECE decided to propose a standalone campus versus a downtown integrated approach. Without a standalone campus, there is no way enough funding can be secured. In other words, Madam Speaker, to fund the future polytechnic, the GNWT needs a "big ticket ask" to bring in "big ticket funding." A plan that would incorporate existing buildings on a rental or leased basis would never get the fiscal support that it needs. As we all know, the feds love to give us capital money while operations and maintenance funding is generally not included.

Madam Speaker, my constituents, and other residents, are still reeling from the surprise announcement that the GNWT wants to build on Tin Can Hill. I understand that the engagement part is to begin now but clearly

before this, nothing was done in a transparent manner.

The facilities master plan, submitted as part of the federal ask, shows all traffic to the campus entering through School Draw Avenue, an area that will become a bottleneck for traffic. People will also cut through the nearby Copper Sky complex to reach 52nd Street causing safety issues for residents there. As well, the plan calls for 50 percent of students to find housing in Yellowknife's rental market. How? Our residential vacancy rate will be zero by this spring, dropping from its current 1.9 percent, and there appears to be very little construction planned once current projects are complete. All this will lead to long-term tenants, including many pensioners and low-income families, to be forced from their homes due to rising rents and neighbourhood gentrification.

When asked, the department's response is that this will all be sorted out through the engagement process. However, Madam Speaker, if this consultation leads to a resounding no from residents, my question is, will the Department listen? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1263-19(2):
CARBON TAX AND INFLATION**

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Cost of living in the -- for Canadians and residents of the Northwest Territories is going up. We see it all around us, the cost of electricity, global fuel prices rising, home heating fuel rising, consumer prices have all gone up. The cost of food inflation is going up everywhere, Madam Speaker. We know the cost of food is going up, especially the fruit, the vegetables, the baked goods, and the cereal. Madam Speaker, people in my riding can barely afford to pay for that. We have to rely on traditional means, hunting, to feed ourselves but the price of gas has gone up as well. Getting out on the land is becoming more expensive.

Electricity bills are going up. NTPC has put before the Public Utility Board the application to raise rates 5 percent over the next two years. Cost of fuel continues to go up. Inflation is at an all-time high.

We also know Nunakput communities face the lowest household income and personal income, the least opportunity for jobs in the territory. Madam Speaker, residents in Nunakput region can't pay for the highest cost

of living. How much more can the residents afford?

I understand the federal government is forcing our government's hand on this tax but the GNWT protecting the residents in the High Arctic. Residents in my riding are having to pay the price of carbon tax. There has to be a way that the GNWT can draw a line to stop rising cost for the residents in Nunakput in a tiered system. We are already dealing with the high impact of climate change, the most sea ice changing, weather impacting our hunting. We shouldn't have to pay carbon tax for that, Madam Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1264-19(2):
ALTERNATIVE ENERGY**

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I too would like to congratulate the Arctic Energy Alliance on 25 years in the Northwest Territories.

Madam Speaker, we all know renewable energy and alternative energy solutions are the future. Our climate is changing and resources are depleting. We know we need to find sustainable energy solutions to replace non-renewable resources.

The Northwest Territories uses three main energy sources to generate electricity: water, diesel, and natural gas, along with some solar energy installations. An objective under the GNWT's 2030 Energy Strategy work is to reduce GHG emissions for electricity. Residents need to know what to expect between now and 2030 to reduce diesel consumption, and NTPC needs a comprehensive capital plan to reduce diesel consumption in the NWT.

There are successful examples of Indigenous companies installing renewable energy projects in partnership with NTPC. But building new energy infrastructure in the NWT does not come cheap. According to a recent report on energy transition, a renewable energy transition requires unprecedented investments in distribution systems and new renewable energy is supply. Given the 30 to \$50 million annual price tag that NTPC pays to maintain our aging energy infrastructure and the added debt the GNWT would have to take on to build new energy infrastructure, it seems this is a clear path.

Partnership with a private sector, particularly Indigenous companies, to advance renewable

energy installations across the NWT is a win-win. Renewable energy projects, developed in partnership with NTPC, ensure that renewable energy feeds into the grid and contributes to the GNWT's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Madam Speaker, when you look at the publicly-available information from NTPC and the GNWT, it is not clear whether there is a capital plan for developing renewable energy infrastructure in partnership with the private sector. But whether or not they have a plan, we are being charged for a lack of energy progression through carbon tax. Carbon pricing is about recognizing the cost of pollution and accounting for those costs in daily decisions, but here in the NWT it's largely the only decision.

Madam Speaker, it's a northern double jeopardy - charged by NTPC for using their expensive aging infrastructure and then charged through carbon tax for using our energy monopoly. With rising costs of diesel and northern cost of living, NWT residents should have a clear outlook of how the territory will add renewable energy sources and what the opportunity is for local companies. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1265-19(2):
WINTER CAMPING

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. People love camping in the Northwest Territories, and I think we all know that. You can just look at the demand the minute the campsite bookings open for our 33 territorial parks, or you could look at the over 900 squatters we're trying to kick off the land right now, Madam Speaker. But what happens every year is that the season abruptly ends, and we have no winter camping anywhere in the Northwest Territories in our 33 beautiful parks that we all know and love, and I would like to see some sort of winter camping, Madam Speaker.

Now I'm not asking that we keep all our parks open year-round; clearly there's not demand for that, but some sort of option somewhere in one of our parks to camp in the winter. Perhaps you could snowshoe into a hut in the Mackenzie Mountains. Perhaps there could be some yurts set up to book in Sombaa K'e. Perhaps a place to legally leave a wall tent. Perhaps a place to have a two-week program of winter activities such as skiing, ice fishing,

or snowshoeing in one of our beautiful parks. Honestly, Madam Speaker, I will take anything at all. We could even put it on a tourism brochure. I just believe we love winter and we love our parks, so why not have some sort of winter camping option. I'll questions for the Minister of ITI. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1266-19(2):
NEW MINIMUM WAGE APPROACH

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. In August, this government announced a new approach to adjustment of the territorial minimum wage, where it will be increased in relation to the consumer price index and the average hourly wage in the NWT. How is this going to ensure people get a decent standard of living?

The factors resulting in the setting of a minimum wage were reviewed for several years running by a minimum wage committee, which included business and public representatives with ECE representatives making a report to the Minister that was then kept secret. A few facts from their reviews stand out and from other recent events:

- A minimum wage is nowhere near the living wage regularly calculated by the territorial social justice NGO Alternatives North.
- Few people are actually paid the minimum wage but about 9 percent of the workforce benefited from the COVID-related Wage Top-Up Program showing the inadequacy of our minimum wage.
- The minimum wage is way too low to live on, and employers can't attract workers in the current competitive hiring environment. Anyone relying on the minimum wage for their income has to have more than one job.
- Proportionately, it's large employers that pay low wages, such as Walmart, Canadian Tire, Tim Horton's, McDonald's, and none of those businesses, their bottom lines, none of them are in danger.

When you look at it, the setting of the minimum wage is a deal between business and government where workers have little to no say. The higher the minimum wage the more the private sector has to provide for workers. The lower the minimum wage the higher the costs to government for social

support programs such as healthcare and more.

A low minimum wage is a public subsidy for business. I operate on the principle that if a person is working, they should be able to maintain a dignified minimum standard of living - working should give you enough money to live on. That's the premise behind calculation of a living wage, which provides the basic basket of necessities for a person or family. That's where we should be going, Madam Speaker. I'll have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on where we're going to get this new approach to a minimum wage. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Member for Thebacha.

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1267-19(2):
SAVING SMALL BUSINESSES**

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Speaker, today I'd like to talk about the business community in the NWT. Over the course of the pandemic, every sector of our economy was adversely impacted by some level because of the interruptions the pandemic had on our daily lives.

Early on in 2020, all nonessential businesses had to shut down entirely and continued doing so periodically into 2021. Those actions have had a serious and long-lasting impact on the business communities, and some businesses have since shut down altogether while others are still trying to recover and remain afloat despite all the costs they had to incur during that time.

Madam Speaker, among the issues that the businesses have had to deal with is the rising cost of commercial insurance. For example, I'm aware of at least one NWT business whose yearly commercial insurance costs have increased from \$17,000 to \$43,000 a year over the course of one year. That business was also forced to find a new insurance company from southern Canada because the NWT company they used previously refused to cover them anymore. These are considerable sums of money for any business to incur but especially for small and medium-sized businesses. How businesses are expected to cover these types of costs and remain open in the long-term is beyond me. This is very concerning and something needs to be done to address this.

Moreover, Madam Speaker, the rising cost of inflation and the cost of living are also causing hardships for the business community. For

example, rising fuel costs are increasing the cost for shipping and the transportation of goods. The price of building materials are also going up, which is increasing the cost of all construction projects. All these costs are putting more pressure on businesses because many of their employees are struggling to make ends meet. Therefore, businesses are struggling to recruit and retain workers at competitive wages. This cycle is creating a shortage of workers in all sectors of our economy and is negatively impacting the business community.

Additionally, Madam Speaker, according to a new report published on October 12th, 2022, authored by the economists at the Royal Bank of Canada, a recession will likely occur in Canada within the first quarter of 2023. Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

RBC, which is Canada's largest bank, says that the primary reasons driving the recession are interest rate increases, inflation, and a rapidly cooling housing market. They anticipate the recession will raise the unemployment rate across the board and that lower income people will be the hardest hit.

Lastly, Madam Speaker, the overall gross domestic product of our economy has been getting smaller with each quarter. So that is also a signal of declining economy. All these factors are harming people and business owners. People need help. I'll have questions for the Minister of ITI later today. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1268-19(2):
DIABETES FRAMEWORK**

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, Bill C-237, An Act to Establish a National Framework for Diabetes, received royal assent on June 29, 2021, in parliament. In response to this Act, the Government of Canada just recently released a framework for diabetes. The report recognizes diabetes is one of the most common chronic diseases affecting people living in Canada. Rates of diabetes is rising around the world. People with diabetes increased the risk of severe outcomes through COVID-19.

We know in the NWT that 10 percent of people in the NWT over 24 years of age are diagnosed with diabetes, and that the rate of

diabetes grows with age and is more prevalent in the regional communities. We also know that our population is aging in the NWT and chronic diseases are projected to rise. What we don't know, Madam Speaker, is how many people are living undiagnosed with diabetes in the NWT.

The health minister herself said in the House, December 2021, for people who need diabetic care it really starts with the diagnosis of diabetes. Madam Speaker, for people living with diabetes undiagnosed, the symptoms may not be that obvious but the consequences of living undiagnosed with diabetes can result in life-threatening complications.

We also know, Madam Speaker, the NWT has a high rate of ambulatory care and that hospitalizations for some chronic conditions could have likely been prevented through better chronic disease management and better access to primary care. Diabetes is a national concern, and it should be a concern for the NWT as well.

What is the GNWT doing to really address the root causes of diabetes and take action that supports the lives of people in small communities? I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services later today. Mahsi.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1269-19(2):
SPEED SKATING AWARD RECIPIENT VAL
GENDRON

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on August 16th Speed Skating NWT proudly reported that Val Gendron from Fort Simpson has been recognized by Speed Skating Canada with a Coaches Award of Excellence. The Coaches Award of Excellence is awarded to those who have made meaningful contributions to the sport of speed skating in the role of a coach. Each year a maximum of three winners are selected for the award. This year they recognized two with Val being one of the two winners.

- The Coaches Award of Excellence is intended to recognize coaching excellence within a given year and may be bestowed upon an individual based on the following criteria:
- Exceptional achievement of the coach's athlete with a strong link to the coach's training program;

- Innovative programming or initiatives that drive athlete recruitment or retention;
- Coaching technique that contributes to athletes development on and off the ice;
- Adapted programming and coaching techniques to keep skaters active and engaged throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

As people in Fort Simpson and the NWT know, Val put her heart and soul into every speed skater she has coached over the last 30 plus years. We would not be happier to have her as part of our community.

Madam Speaker, I have been very fortunate as a parent, now as a grandparent, to have Val in my children and grandchildren's sport life. It is very interesting to watch her with generations of children and the love she passes on to the athletes for the sport. I am happy to say my daughter was part of the nomination team for Val's submission. On behalf of the community of Fort Simpson, I would like to again congratulate her for the award and, more importantly, passing on the love of the sport to our youth.

Madam Speaker, I will ask my colleagues to recognize her here today with a round of applause. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Range Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1270-19(2):
REMEMBERING CANADIANS WHO
FOUGHT FOR OUR FREEDOMS

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today, I'd like to talk about the bravery and sacrifice of Canadians, both past and present, who have helped, and continue to help, shape, and protect the foundation of our society - freedom.

For generations, men and women have heeded the call to protect democracy. They have left their families, their dreams of higher education, a good-paying job, their desire to create music or art, all so we can live our lives the way we choose.

Madam Speaker, they protected us from evil so we could enjoy the peace and prosperity we know today. Their stories can be found in cities, towns, and villages across Canada. It has long been a practice in many Canadian jurisdictions to name geographical features in honour of men and women in the Canadian Armed Forces who died in service of their

country. It's no different here, Madam Speaker.

There are 316 place names in the Northwest Territories named in honour of those who gave their lives to protect freedom and democracy.

Located just north of the Saskatchewan border, Moss Lake is named after Warrant Officer Class 1 Donald Moss, who died on December 22nd, 1941. Son of Arthur and Kezia Moss, of Toronto, Moss has no known grave. His name is inscribed on the Runnymede Memorial in Surrey, U.K.

Woodman's Head, located near Blackwater Lake, just north of Wrigley, is named after Leading Aircraftman William Daniel Holloway Woodman, who died on August 8th, 1944. Son of Thomas and Anne Woodman of Edmonton, AB, Woodman is buried in the Harrowgate Cemetery in Yorkshire, United Kingdom.

Madam Speaker, Golby Island that is located on Lac La Marte, just northwest of the community of Whati, is named after Lieutenant Commander Thomas Maitland Wake Golby, who died on February 22nd, 1943, along with six members of his crew when his shipyard was mined and sunk east of Gibraltar. Son of Agnes Golby; husband of Joan A. Golby, of Victoria, BC, he has no known grave. His name is inscribed on the Halifax Memorial.

The list of place names is available on the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre website, Madam Speaker, and I hope Members of this House and residents will take the time to look at the list. It is a resource that can help us better understand the names of places around us, and the people who gave their lives so current and future generations could live free. Madam Speaker, Lest we Forget

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Members' statements. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I'd like to take the opportunity, on behalf of Mr. Speaker's absence, to recognize two of his constituents from Aklavik Moose Kerr School Kyler Irish and Gabriel McLeod who's here as pages.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Minister Archie.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I'd like to recognize the staff from the Arctic Energy Alliance that have joined us today in the gallery. We have

Mark Heyck who is our executive director. He's here along with his staff, Marta Goodwin, Faye MacDonald, Libby Macphail, Leon Milner, Dharshan Maheswaran, Sheena Adams, Linda Todd, Abdul Mohammed, Kevin Cull.

I'd like to -- we have some folks that are tuned in, Louise Schumann and Darby Desrosiers.

Also I'd like to recognize Robert Sexton who is the president of the Arctic Energy Alliance board of directors.

Steve Loutitt is here as well, my deputy minister for the Department of Infrastructure has joined, along with his daughter Emmy Loutitt. I know Emmy has shown a keen interest here in the Legislative Assembly.

So welcome to you all. Thank you for being here.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I also would like to congratulate the Arctic Energy Alliance for 25 years of service to the NWT in saving energy and introduce four members of the staff who are residents of Yellowknife Centre - Faye MacDonald, Dharshan Maheswaran, Taylor Arsenault, and Mark Heyck. Thank you very much for coming.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam le Presidente. I too would like to recognize a Frame Lake resident in the gallery, Sheena Adams, whose the program coordinator for Arctic Energy Alliance, and former Yellowknife city council colleague Mark Heyck serves as the executive director. So I'm sure they're here to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Arctic Energy Alliance, and I welcome them to the proceedings today. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to recognize Jennifer Wicks who is a constituent of Range Lake. Welcome to the House.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would also like to welcome and congratulate Arctic Energy Alliance. I guess nobody

probably told you that you get lots of acknowledgement when you show up in the gallery. I specifically would also like to acknowledge my constituents Abdul Mohammed and Kevin Cull who are here from Great Slave. Thank you very much.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife South.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we are a very interconnected little community here in Yellowknife. And so also present from Arctic Energy Alliance are Marta Goodwin and also Mike Goodwin. And, Madam Speaker, deputy minister Loutitt also happens to be a resident of Yellowknife South when he's not acting in his deputy minister role, as is Emmy Loutitt. I welcome all of you to the gallery. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to acknowledge and welcome Leon Apple, originally from Gameti, and he currently lives in Yellowknife. And I would like to welcome the Arctic Alliance as well. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. While we're giving all the love right above me here, the Arctic Energy Alliance, I'd love to direct some above Cabinet over there. We also have in the House with us this evening -- or sorry, this afternoon, Avery Parle, who is the vice-president of the Northern Territories Federation of Labour. So welcome.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Last but not least Yellowknife North constituent Linda Todd, everyone. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Well, if we haven't forgotten everyone, so welcome. If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the chamber, and I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. It's always nice to have an audience in here. We haven't had one for a long time. I think this is the biggest we've seen since the day when cabinet was elected. Welcome.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Reports of committee on the review of bills. Reports of

standing and special committees. Member for Yellowknife North.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 37-19(2): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2022 AUDIT OF ADDICTIONS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY SERVICES

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's going to be another long one today. Madam Speaker, Your Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its Report on the Review of the 2022 Audit of Addictions Prevention and Recovery Services and commends it to the House.

Reviewing the Addictions Audit to improve the GNWT's Workplan Response

On May 31, 2022, the Speaker tabled an audit report entitled Addictions Prevention and Recovery Services in the Northwest Territories. This performance audit was conducted by the Auditor General of Canada, who is also the Auditor General for the Northwest Territories.

The performance audit looked at whether the Department of Health and Social Services, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority, and the Tlicho Community Services Agency provided addictions services to meet the needs of Northerners. This audit matters because the NWT has a high rate of substance use and addictions have widespread impacts on the lives of individuals, families, and community members.

The audit found that the department and the three health authorities:

- Had not figured out how to achieve equitable access to addictions services;
- Did not do enough to ensure addictions services were culturally safe for Indigenous residents;
- Provided only limited aftercare services;
- Had gaps in coordinating addictions services; and
- Did not do enough to collect and analyze data to know whether their addictions services were effective in helping residents achieve their desired outcomes.

The audit made seven recommendations to improve addictions services. The department and health authorities accepted all seven recommendations. In response, they developed the Addictions Prevention and Recovery Services Workplan. The workplan highlights new actions the department and health authorities are taking to address the audit recommendations.

Committee is responsible for reviewing the audit and the department's response. The review ensures that government is accountable to correct deficiencies, implement recommendations, and execute policies and programs in line with the Legislative Assembly's intentions.

On October 6, 2022, committee held a public hearing on the report. Officials at the Office of the Auditor General and the department briefed committee. They explained key audit findings and the department's workplan.

In response, committee developed thirteen (13) recommendations. Our recommendations reinforce accountability and request additional actions to improve programs and services that help Northerners avoid and heal from addictions. If implemented, these recommendations will:

1. Provide immediate supports to young men;
2. Ensure healthcare services are culturally safe;
3. Secure federal support to set up healing centres in the NWT; and
4. Strengthen the follow-up process.

Committee is pleased to submit these recommendations and looks forward to their implementation.

Responding to suicide deaths

On October 3, 2022, the chief coroner took the unprecedented step of releasing data earlier than usual on suicide deaths. The data points to a health crisis: In the first nine months of 2022, 18 Northerners died of suicide, more than in any full year in the last two decades.

In releasing these statistics early, the the chief coroner hoped to spur the government to respond. Indeed, the Minister of Health and Social Services has indicated that "a whole-of-government response is needed."

Committee also sought to respond to the chief coroner's report in the context of this audit review. The chief coroner's report includes a

statistic that potentially connects suicide deaths to addictions services – that is, the number of suicide deaths with alcohol as a contributing factor.

To get a better understanding, committee examined more than twenty years of data on suicide deaths. Committee found that.

- Since 2001, 212 Northerners have died by suicide
- Alcohol was a contributing factor in over one in every two deaths, 112 in total.
- Males under age 40 made up over one in every two deaths, 114 in total.

The age profile of the NWT's suicide deaths is younger than Canada's. Here, men in their twenties and thirties are most likely to die of suicide. Across Canada, men in their forties and fifties are most at-risk.

These statistics, and the loss of life that they quantify, are deeply upsetting. Each life lost is a tragedy that extends to families, friends, and communities.

The link between many suicide deaths and alcohol points to the urgency of the audit's focus: to provide addictions prevention and recovery services that meet the needs of Northerners.

The department's workplan commits to promising plans to improve addictions services. But many planned activities, even if implemented successfully and to the full, have timelines of a year or more. Process-driven activities, such as revising hiring practices by the end of 2023-24, will take longer still to influence service quality.

While committee supports all the department's planned activities and understands this work takes time, committee wants to see actions with immediate impacts. Incorporating these immediate actions into the work plan would enhance its relevance, effectiveness, and credibility. Committee's recommendations for immediate actions focus on the demographic group most at-risk of living with suicidal thoughts or behaviour: young men.

I will now turn it over to the MLA for Thebacha. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS:

RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide immediate supports to young men

Ease access to the On the Land Healing Fund

The On the Land Healing Fund helps Indigenous governments and organizations provide land-based addictions treatment, including aftercare programming.

However, the Auditor heard from some Indigenous groups that administrative requirements make accessing the fund difficult. In both 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, the department failed to distribute \$500,000 to \$600,000, almost one third of the fund's \$1.8 million budget. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 1

That the Department of Health and Social Services review and relax administrative requirements to access the On the Land Healing Fund, with a view to ensuring full uptake of budgeted funds in 2022-2023, and report on whether the funds were dispersed.

Increase support for men's wellness programs

More generally, the GNWT should ensure that all budgeted dollars that support men's wellness are spent each year. Effective programs should receive increased support. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 2

That the Government of the Northwest Territories increase funding for grants and contribution programs that target men's wellness.

Sponsor a Men's Wellness Conference

In October 2022, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council in Saskatchewan hosted a men's wellness conference. The conference discussed the root causes of issues facing some Indigenous men and solutions for change. Over 200 men participated.

Media reporting of the conference includes testimonies that highlight numerous positive outcomes. Participants opened up, shared painful experiences, gained emotional understanding, used humour to balance heavy talks, and recognized that they were not alone. Organizers hoped the men would bring lessons and renewed hope back home, launching their own groups to support healing and change.

Committee wants to see a similar conference in the NWT and believes it could be organized

within six months. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 3

That the Department of Health and Social Services, in consultation with Indigenous governments, and by the spring 2023, sponsor a men's wellness conference. The conference should focus on hearing, learning, and sharing about the root causes of issues facing some men, such as racism, trauma, isolation, violence, and addictions.

Add a youth priority area to the work plan

The department's work plan is broken down into seven priority areas, corresponding to the Auditor's seven recommendations. Considering that suicide deaths occur disproportionately among young men, committee wants to see an eighth priority focused on people aged 29 years and under.

This new priority area should bring together relevant activities focused on young people from the rest of the work plan into one spot. Potential examples include:

- Equitable access to addictions services for youth in child and family services;
- Disaggregating data on young people; and
- Reviewing job descriptions to hire more Indigenous graduates as youth counsellors.

This youth priority area should also add two new commitments. The second commitment, on sports and recreation, requires the collaboration of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. The Minister of MACA has said that sport and recreation programming is important, especially to youth, for its health and social benefits, including mental wellness. Committee agrees, but is unclear whether MACA sees its role in mental health promotion in collaboration with other GNWT departments and agencies. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 4

That the Department of Health and Social Services, in collaboration with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, add an eighth priority to the Addictions Prevention and Recovery Work Plan focusing on people aged 29 and under. This priority area should include clear commitments and performance measures to:

- Increase access to and uptake in counselling and healing supports; and
- Increase youth participation in sports and recreation, including measures to improve access to facilities and programming.

Ensure healthcare services are culturally safe

Measure cultural safety effectively

The Auditor's definition of cultural safety was "an outcome where Indigenous people feel safe, respected, and free from racism and discrimination when accessing health and social services programs." Cultural safety is important to remove barriers to accessing services and make it more likely these services will meet Indigenous clients' needs.

A key challenge to ensuring cultural safety is effective measurement. Measurement is important because programs intended to boost diversity, equity, and inclusion, can have varying levels of effectiveness and must be assessed with evidence. But since cultural safety is an outcome inherent to the Indigenous client, departmental reviews of standards and policies is not enough to ensure cultural safety. Insight from Indigenous clients is required. Committee encourages the department to set a goal toward defining how culturally safe outcomes are measured. This work should be done in collaboration with the NTHSSA Leadership Council. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 5

That the Department of Health and Social Services implement. An approach to measure whether users and non-users of the Government of the Northwest Territories addictions services find those services to be culturally safe and provide a timeline for implementation.

I will now turn the document over to the MLA for Kam Lake.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Extend work on cultural safety throughout government

The importance of cultural safety extends beyond addictions services. Committee wants to see work to understand, enhance, and measure cultural safety applied to other areas at the health authorities and in the GNWT. The

department should outline how it will build on its most recent cultural safety action plan, Caring for Our People, in the months and years ahead. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 6

That the Government of the Northwest Territories conduct a whole-of-government review of cultural safety in all standards and policies associated with GNWT programs and services and provide a timeline for implementation. This review should identify barriers to cultural safety to inform efforts to remove or reduce identified barriers.

Prioritize revised hiring practices

The work plan aims to revise hiring practices for addictions positions that formally recognized the value of Indigenous qualifications by 2023-2024 fourth quarter. Members believe this work should be completed sooner.

Work on job descriptions and hiring practices should have already been underway before the work plan was developed. The Department of Finance's Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Action Plan contains five action items to increase Indigenous representation at all departments and agencies, including at the health authorities. That plan was launched almost one year ago, in November 2021. The department and health authorities should collaborate with the Department of Finance to expedite this work plan commitment. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 7

That the Department of Health and Social Services and health and social services authorities, in collaboration with the Department of Finance, prioritize their commitment to revise hiring practices for addictions positions to recognize the value of Indigenous qualifications. Committee further recommends the timeline for this work to be moved up by six months, to the second quarter of 2023-2024.

Incorporate Indigenous knowledge into standards of practice

While the work plan commits to revising the hiring process to recognize the value of Indigenous qualifications, it does not explicitly extend that logic beyond the hiring phase and specifically to standards of practice. Western medical standards create barriers to cultural safety for Indigenous residents. They make it harder for Indigenous people to gain accreditations to become healthcare providers

within the system. They also distort the measurement of outcomes. Indigenous people lead different lives than non-Indigenous people. The desired healthcare outcomes for Indigenous people do not always match those defined by Western standards.

Indigenous standards of practice are also a matter of rights. Article 24.1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples declare that "Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices." Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 8

That the Department of Health and Social Services and health and social services authorities review and adjust standards of practice to recognize the value of Indigenous knowledge and provide a timeline for implementation.

Set up mechanism for staff-identified changes

To complement the work plan's top-down, holistic approach, committee proposes a bottom-up mechanism for healthcare staff to identify improvements. This will empower frontline staff to develop, implement, and communicate creative solutions in real time while the larger policy approach is in development.

Committee is not aware of any such mechanism, available system-wide, to drive bottom-up change. Frontline workers have an important perspective on the challenges in service delivery. They may be able to propose out-of-the-box solutions not conceived elsewhere. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 9

That the Department of Health and Social Services and health and social services authorities set up a distinct method for frontline staff to identify barriers to care and cultural safety or propose better practices and policies on an ongoing basis and provide a timeline for implementation.

Reach those at risk who do not use addictions services

A key concern for committee is overcoming barriers to risk at each individual who does not access addictions services. The Auditor highlighted the need to gather data from individuals who are not service users. Committee believes the work plan can go farther to reach at-risk individuals and therefore recommends:

Recommendation 10

That the Department of Health and Social Services collect and analyze data from residents who do not use GNWT addictions prevention and recovery services, to identify creative ways to remove barriers and make services more culturally safe and provide a timeline for implementation.

Secure federal support to set up healing centres in the NWT.

Members have heard repeated cries for one or more in-territory healing centres. Right now, Northerners who want to access facility-based addictions treatments must leave the NWT to receive this service. Neither the audit nor the work plan provide a determination on whether the NWT should set up in-territory healing centres. The auditor noted that the lack of in-territory facilities could create barriers for some clients, including those concerned that southern treatment may not reflect their culture. However, the auditor stopped short of recommending a healing centre. The work plan is silent on the matter.

By contrast, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action No. 21 is quite clear. It states: "We call upon the federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools, and to ensure that the funding of healing centres in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is a priority."

The federal government recently made good on this Call to Action for Nunavut. Canada is providing nearly \$50 million to support up to 75 percent of the construction costs for the Nunavut Recovery Centre. Nunavut's centre will be based on Inuit cultural practices and provide a range of treatment and healing interventions. Canada will also provide \$10 million in ongoing annual operating support.

Between Call to Action No. 21 and Nunavut's recent precedent, committee believes it's time for the GNWT to secure federal support for one or more healing centres in the territory. This should include immediate access to detox centres in each region. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 11

That the Government of the Northwest Territories, in collaboration with Indigenous governments, pursue federal funding to help set up healing centres in the Northwest Territories.

Strengthen the follow-up process

Present performance measures and regular reporting

Committee wants to ensure that the department demonstrates its progress towards achieving the work plan's expected results. One potential risk, in this regard, lies in the lack of disclosure on performance measures. The work plan that the department presented at the October 6th public briefing contained activity measures to describe what work would be done. The work plan also included high-level statements on expected results. But missing were specific performance results that are easily measurable.

Committee is aware that the auditor required the department to comply with word count limits. More detailed aspects of the work plan, like performance measures, may not have fit within the publishing constraints. Committee wants to see performance measures and regular public reporting on progress towards associated targets. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 12

That the Department of Health and Social Services present performance measures for each activity in the Addictions Prevention and Recovery Work Plan and provide a timeline for implementation. The department should report on progress with:

- A web-based tracker, similar to ECE's Action Plan to Improve Student Outcomes Progress Tracker, on a quarterly basis; and
- A public briefing at committee, in spring or summer 2023 before the 19th Assembly ends.

Madam Speaker, I would like to pass the final reading of this report back to the MLA for Yellowknife North. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Incorporate recommendations into work plan

Committee's recommendations aim to reinforce existing commitments in the work plan and initiate additional actions to enhance addictions prevention and recovery services.

Committee wants to see the department respond more substantially than with a

standard tabled response and sooner than in 120 days. Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 13: That the Department of Health and Social Services make changes to its Addictions Prevention and Recovery Work Plan, as soon as possible, to reflect the recommendations contained in this committee report

Conclusion

This concludes the Standing Committee on Government Operations' Report on the Review of the 2022 Audit of Addictions Prevention and Recovery Services. Committee looks forward to the government's response to these recommendations.

Recommendation 14

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that the Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2022 Audit of Addictions, Prevention and Recovery Services in the Northwest Territories be received by the Assembly and moved into committee for further consideration. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 9.4(4), and ask that Committee Report 37-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report of the Review of the 2022 Audit of Addictions Prevention and Recovery Services in the Northwest Territories, be referred directly to Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, we have to go back to the unanimous consent of -- thank you. So the motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried. The

committee report will be moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

---Carried

Reports of standing and special committees.
Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm seeking unanimous consent, again to waive Rule 9.4(4), so that this Committee Report 37-19(2) can be referred directly to Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 9.4 (4) and have Committee Report 37-19(2) referred directly to Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Committee Report 37-19 (2) will be referred directly to the Committee of the Whole for consideration later today.

Reports of standing and special committees.
Returns to oral questions. Acknowledgements.
Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1272-19(2): SENIORS' HOUSING

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Our NWT's senior population is ever increasing. Just to maintain a home, it's becoming an issue for many seniors. Winter is especially difficult for many. General home maintenance is difficult to maintain and is very costly. Accessibility and comfort is an issue. Seniors need barrier-free access. Madam Speaker, seniors want to know they are a priority to this government. Can the Minister responsible for Housing NWT inform this House how her department is actively addressing housing needs for an increasing number of NWT seniors? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of NWT Housing.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the Member for his question. Housing NWT is a part of the interdepartmental mandate efforts to enable seniors to age in place with dignity by increasing supports for seniors to stay in their homes and communities and that this has also played a part in the Housing NWT's strategic renewal efforts. Housing NWT continues to administer over 370 public housing units for seniors across the territory. Housing NWT's designs continue to reflect the needs of our

seniors. For example, as part of our current federal cost-shared new public housing unit delivery, Housing NWT is delivering an innovative two storey duplex that can accommodate seniors accessibility needs on the first floor. As part of the 100 new public housing unit delivery, Housing NWT is delivering ten accessible seniors units that will be allocated to all five regions of the Northwest Territories. These units will be designed in a way that seniors can age in place in their home and have their accessibility needs addressed. Housing NWT continues to support a suite of homeownership programs tailored to the needs of the seniors, such as the Seniors Aging in Place Program. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. And I thank the Minister for that response. Madam Speaker, can the Minister tell me has the technical assessment of the Riverview Lodge in Hay River been completed, and if not, where is it in the process that the Minister previously indicated was underway? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the Member for the question and the statement as well too. Housing NWT has undertaken a technical assessment of the Riverview Lodge in Hay River. The findings of this report indicate that overall the building is in good condition. The report includes a range of recommended capital upgrades to extend the building's operation life for over another -- for another ten years. Housing NWT continues to maintain the building and closely monitors its condition. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That's interesting with the findings there and, you know, when I've had the opportunity to go in the building, you know, I might have a difference of opinion. But anyways, Madam Speaker, can the Minister tell those seniors in Hay River whether their planning for a new seniors multi-residential facility has been completed or at least started with an estimated timeframe. Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The seniors housing needs continue to be a discussion with the community as part of the development of the Hay River's community housing plan. Preliminary planning for the replacement of Riverview Lodge is underway, including possible funding sources. Detailed plans for the replacement of the building will involve close community engagement with leadership, the Hay River Senior's Society, and stakeholders. A range of

factors will be considered in the process, such as proximity and local amenities. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Final supplementary. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the Minister tell me in the decommissioning of Riverview Lodge in ten years, has consideration been given to include planning for a new facility on that site? I think the location of it is important because it is downtown, and seniors like the location. It allows them to get out and walk and visit and also to use the amenities that the downtown core provides. Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm happy to say that Housing is considering this area for future development. We do have plans that are on the way. Right now it is a discussion within the department, and I will keep the Member informed as we progress with the new seniors' complex. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

QUESTION 1273-19(2):
HEATING COSTS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My Member's statement was the GNWT presented legislation to increase carbon tax last week. Legislation will remove carbon tax rebate for home heating fuel, change increase of home heating bills by hundreds of dollars in my riding. In the press release yesterday, Madam Speaker, there was nothing said about the impact of heating bills. Can the Minister tell me how much heating bills will go up for the average household in the communities of Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk, Ulukhaktok, and Tuktoyaktuk? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I do have that information. I was just trying to see if I could pull it up quickly to provide that sense. I certainly can say, Madam Speaker, that quite unfortunately the communities in the riding of Nunakput are likely to be facing some of the highest impacts from the change to the federal carbon tax rate. And Madam Speaker, I'm not sure it does much good at this point to try to guess at those numbers. But they certainly are facing some of the highest increases certainly in the Northwest Territories as a result of the

change to that carbon tax rate. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could we have that information that she just said before the end of the sitting.

Madam Speaker, our government's press release said nothing about the impact of higher carbon taxes in heating bills. It didn't say anything about the impact of cost of living average in a household or a business. When the government raises its taxes to explain the impact of people from \$50 a ton to \$65 a ton, it's not meaningful information for the people. Government should provide more transparent accessible information on its proposal, Madam Speaker.

Can the Minister commit to release information on how the carbon tax will affect households in each community now through to 2030? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I certainly will be able to release that and make sure that we get it to the Members, make sure we get that out to the public. And Madam Speaker, you know, to be very clear also there's a difference in terms of who's being impacted. Folks that own their home are likely to pay more because they pay their heating fuel. Folks that are in market rentals that are paying for their heating fuel are likely to pay more. Folks who are in social housing or affordable housing will not be paying simply because that's part of the costs that get paid for them. Or if someone lives in a rental situation where the landlord won't be passing that on, they wouldn't, although given the increases, that is certainly not something one wouldn't want to plan on. But there are a number of households who are in other circumstances, they will be facing increases and we'll make sure to get that information out what the anticipated average rate increases will be by community. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the press release said, again, that GNWT offset its heating costs using a cost of living offset will the equal average out household heating cost increase and the people will still get impacted through the social housing due to the local LHOs going to still have to pay for that fuel which comes out of their budget which is so limited.

Madam Speaker, will the Minister consider a fairer approach to the carbon tax to offset such as a tiered cost of living offset payments to give more support to the people of the

Beaufort Delta in a tiered system? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I certainly would consider that. And Madam Speaker, I just wanted to acknowledge that, you know, it's thanks very much to the ideas presented by committee that the department can go back and take some time and see if there are other ways to try to mitigate the increases to the federal carbon tax. One being a tiered system by region but at the same time looking at, you know, that -- as I said earlier, home -- someone who owns their home, someone who doesn't own their home, even within a region, there's going to be differences in what someone pays. So we do want to do some work to try to be as equitable as possible but acknowledging that because there certainly are those ridings who are facing those higher costs, Madam Speaker, we are going to go back and see if there is a way to adjust to account for that. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you. I thank the Minister for that, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, some provinces rebate provincial sales tax and heating bills. We don't pay provincial sales tax but we do pay GST in our heating bills, and that adds 5 percent on our tax on every bill. What measures has the Minister considered to support heating costs in the Beaufort Delta? Has the Minister considered asking the federal government for a rebate GST on heating bills in the territories when heating costs is most expensive? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I can say that I have not heard it raised, the idea of requesting specifically a GST rebate on heating fuel. So as I said earlier, I'm happy to take that forward. And more generally, I will acknowledge I've certainly been tasked by my colleagues to take the message to Ottawa given the impacts of climate change in the Northwest Territories that the increased costs and what that's going to do to individual residents and businesses is, as I say, a message that I've been tasked to carry forward and I certainly will do so. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Great Slave.

QUESTION 1274-19(2):
AURORA COLLEGE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS
ACCESSIBILITY

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of ECE. Can the Minister explain how the department and the city are going to work together in order to finalize the access to Tin Can Hill as a university? And by access, I mean the physical access. We can talk about the getting Northerners into the university at a later day. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of ECE.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So there is a regulatory process, and the City of Yellowknife -- it is their regulatory process. And so officials are meeting with the -- officials from ECE are meeting with the officials from the City of Yellowknife to get an understanding of what that process is and the timelines involved with that. But it is through that process that the issues of traffic flow and things like that can be dealt with. And the college wants to be a good neighbour to all of the residents in the area. I can assure you of that. And we don't want to create a situation where there is, you know, concern in the neighbourhood or there's safety concerns. That's not the goal. The goal is to build a post-secondary institution to benefit the people of the Northwest Territories, not to cause disruptions in neighbourhoods. So as I said, the city is driving those -- that regulatory process, but as soon as we find out what that process is and we get some timelines, I'd be happy to share that with the Member. Thank you.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. And I appreciate the Minister's comments and commitments to share with me. I do think that there's a lot that can be done to ensure that residents don't feel blindsided as we progress. And I just want to get that plug in for extension of 52nd Street so that School Draw and Copper Sky don't deal with the traffic coming out of the university.

My next question, though, is to do with the facilities management plan. It does comment in the plan that the community learning centres are going to be a key role in the future polytechnic as extensions into the smaller communities and tied to their regional centres of Fort Smith, Inuvik, and Yellowknife campuses.

So can the Minister speak to the fact that several of the small communities do not have a community learning centre, so how will those

communities get that support or be an extension of the nearby polytechnic campus if they don't have a learning centre in which to operate? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. And one of the goals that we set out with this transformation was to ensure that the college had a presence in every single community in the Northwest Territories. And that's not the case right now. What that presence looks like, that is what is being worked out. In a perfect world, there would be a physical space with appropriate internet connections and whatnot in every community, but this is a massive project and we're looking at improvements to the three campuses as well as a number of community learning centres. So it's not likely that every community will have a community learning centre, a physical space in the near future. But the college does want to be able to expand what they offer online so that if you're in a community without a community learning centre, you can begin your studies online and then perhaps move to a community with a community learning centre or to a campus community to complete those studies. Thank you.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I almost thought I was going to get a commitment there for every community to get a community learning centre but the Minister is smarter than that. So I do appreciate the commitment on the access; however, that does bring up the lack of internet and computer availability and education within our small communities. I guess then that leads me to my question.

I sort of noted in this job if someone is not responsible for something in particular, no one seems to become responsible for it. So who within the organization of ECE will be the person that coordinates and ensures that the communities get those CLC faculties or at least have the access to that in the community? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So we're on a path, along with Aurora College, towards a polytechnic university. And it is going to be the college who is going to be making those decisions about access as we progress further. Once we have a board of governors in place, which I hope happens early in the new year, it will be that board of governors that will be fulfilling the mandate of the college and focus -- one of the focuses from the beginning has been ensuring access to college programs in every community. So it will be the board of

governors who will be tasked with ensuring there is access in every community. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Final supplementary.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. And I know there were some controversy around the board of governors, but I won't touch that here today. I guess my last question is around how will the community learning centres be used to utilize or open up for other initiatives within the community? I had the great fortune of going over to Makerspace recently and seeing their space, and the big conversation there was not so much about always having the programming for people but having the space so others can execute their programming. So if the Minister could respond to that, that would be great. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And since we've made the changes to the Aurora College Act, I can't speak for the college, but we are working closely together so I can say that the college is open to working with community partners. There is a Makerspace up in Inuvik, and that is part of the college already. And so if there are other opportunities to work with third parties and their synergies, if there's space required and the college has that space, I know that they would be happy to make those connections when it makes sense. We all need to work together and pool our resources. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 1275-19(2):
DIABETES

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, my questions to the health Minister stem from my Member's statement regarding diabetes.

Canada's framework for diabetes acknowledges a self-reported rate of diabetes among First Nations and Metis adults is, respectfully, 1.9 to 1.5 times that of non-Indigenous adults. And the number rises to 4.7 percent among Inuit.

The report also notes cases of diabetes in Indigenous communities are often more severe than those in the general population. My question is what is the health Minister doing specifically to address the rate of diabetes among Indigenous people in the NWT, especially the Indigenous communities? Mahsi.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we don't have a specific Indigenous diabetes approach but we are well aware that this is a disease that has a greater effect on Indigenous people, and men in particular, and so that's something that we work with awareness of.

We started some primary healthcare reform projects in the last year, and one of the aims of these is to improve access to services for people who have chronic conditions. So the planning is underway now to expand the primary healthcare reform projects to the Deh Cho, Tlicho, Beaufort Delta, and Hay River regions. So with that, the Member should be able to see some changes in his community around chronic disease management. Thank you.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Speaker, and mahsi to the Minister for that. I think she took care of my second question so I'll move on to my third one.

Madam Speaker, can the Minister commit to increase diabetes awareness and education in small communities and the consequences of untreated diabetes in a culturally relevant setting. Mahsi.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we have a territorial specialist of chronic disease management who has been in the position since May of 2019. It's that person's job to research and provide recommendations on patient care standards related to chronic disease management services. The focus is on providing culturally appropriate and standardized diabetes programming by working with all of the community-based dieticians to ensure that that's the case. Thank you.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, can the Minister commit to including screening efforts in small communities in a culturally relevant setting where people are empowered to get tested? Mahsi.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, this is a timely question. All persons, regardless of where they live, are offered screening for diabetes. That's an inventory of risk factors and then a blood test which would confirm whether the person is diabetic or prediabetic.

I'm pleased to say that work is going to begin this year, and ongoing for three years, to work with families who are living with type two diabetes to develop culturally relevant diabetes education materials and programming and looking also at on-the-land camps that would be specifically for intergenerational families affected by diabetes. So planning is going to begin on developing and putting out this initiative in the next few months. And I welcome the Member to ask me additional questions in the winter session. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 1276-19(2):
NURSING BURSARIES

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, my questions, to start, are for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

We learned last week that there are currently 30 spots in the Aurora College nursing program. So I'm wondering if the Minister can tell us how many bursaries are available? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. My information is that there are a total of 121 people enrolled in the nursing program, and 29 of them are first year. And between 24 and 28 typically are Northern or Indigenous. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. So, Madam Speaker, if there are, for example, 30 spots available to first-year students of which 29 are filled, does that mean that there are every year 30 bursaries available for those students? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, it's my understanding that there are enough funds to cover 25 bursaries. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I'm wondering why we would undersubscribe a program -- or sorry, underfund a program. And I mean -- and maybe that's just how we go in Health and Social Services, is underfunding our programs and we need to stop doing that. But if we have 30 potential spots, why would there not be 30 potential bursaries for 30 potential nursing students so that we can

potentially say, okay, we only have 29 first-year students; let's put this one last spot out there so that we can recruit one last person to make sure that this program is fully subscribed. So why is there not 30 bursaries available if there are 30 spots available? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. This is part of the trajectory of health needs to do more and more and more without any additional money. So this program is funded from within. What we can afford to do is 25 students at this point.

I want to say, however, that this bursary is not the only bursary or way to receive additional funds for education. If people in the nursing program go to the bursary section of the Aurora College website, they'll see some additional ways that they can apply for funding. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Final supplementary. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we have \$193.7 million deficit within NTHSSA. Two of the main reasons for this deficit creeping up are cost of overtime due to staffing shortages and underfunded locum costs. So I think that investing in education in exchange for return of service is a good investment of this territory. So my question comes back to investment in bursaries is will this government provide bursaries in exchange for years of service to anybody who wants to be a nurse so that their program is fully subscribed every year? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the bursary program is for Indigenous and northern students. It's not for the southern students who apply to go to school in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Thebacha. She did -- oh, sorry, Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: I was counting. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, my last question for the Minister, then, is will they change the criteria of the program to include NWT residents so that even people who have made their home here for the last ten plus years and want to contribute to this deficit of staffing and a staffing shortage can partake in this program? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, as I said earlier to

the Member this week, this program actually hasn't launched yet. The uptake is unknown. The funding is secure for the 25 positions at this point. So while I know she would like to score a point today, it is not possible for me to commit to what she wants. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1277-19(2):
SAVING SMALL BUSINESS

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In my statement earlier I talked about the many issues that the business community are facing right now. Can the Minister of ITI explain if her department has a plan to help address the rising costs of commercial insurance for businesses in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, there's not a formal plan or policy or strategy around responding to insurance costs. Insurance costs are something that arises as a result of private market factors. And unfortunately, the Northwest Territories does face higher premiums generally. We have a smaller population over which the industry can spread its risk out. There's, you know, obviously remote location. There is the factor of the types of building materials that are used when we're dealing with capital insurance or capital products and assets, houses. And the fact is there's often limited emergency services. All of these are factors that can lead to higher costs in the North and not necessarily ones that we have an immediate ability to mitigate for residents or small businesses.

What I can say, Madam Speaker, though, is much as you've seen happen unfortunately with recent emergencies such as COVID, such as the floods, that if there are an acute event that occurs that the government does monitor such things and can step in to fill gaps if there are gaps and can step in and to ensure that there are not further emergencies. So while certainly I would be hopeful that we don't reach that point on an insurance front, we do keep an eye on what is occurring and, to the extent that we can, try to get information out to the small business community around what they might do to mitigate. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Speaker, will the Minister commit to have ITI work with the Department of Finance to find a concrete

solution that can help lower the rates of overall commercial insurance rates for the NWT businesses? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, as I was just saying there's not a lot directly that the government can necessarily do. But what I would certainly be willing to look at is perhaps having the two departments come together and see if there's room through which the government can help advocate or room through which the government might be able to provide more information to small businesses, to the small business community, about what they might do to help influence their own rates. There may be information that is, you know, more readily available to some than to others, for example, with respect to, you know, the Insurance Bureau of Canada, what they do, what they might be useful -- how they might be useful, you know, other opportunities of where you might look to influence your insurance rates. And that may be a function or a role for government to act as an advocate but also as a pathfinder. So I will go back to both departments and see if that is something that we can get some more information out to. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I like the Minister's response. Madam Speaker, can the Minister tell us if her department agrees with the economists at the Royal Bank of Canada and anticipates a recession occurring in 2023? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I'm not good to providing a prediction here today. I certainly can say the Department of Finance is monitoring this. I know the Bank of Canada just put out their most recent monetary policy. And certainly I know I'm reading those documents, and our department's staff and fiscal policy are also reading those materials and keeping an eye on what is happening. But I think really where I want to go, Madam Speaker, in responding is to reassure that in that monitoring that we are doing so not just as an academic exercise. We're doing that so that we would be in a position to know what the impacts would be on the fiscal strategy of the government so that we would then know what that might, in turn, do, you know, whether it's to our procurement, whether it's to hiring, and to know what is happening in the economy at large so that, again, departments such as ITI can go out and make sure they are supporting industry. Our economy is very heavily reliant on the public sector, and the

good news with the bad news is that gives us a bit more insulation to some of the shocks that you might otherwise see. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake. Oh, she got one more? Oh, I thought you said that was the last one. Okay, sorry, Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Speaker, if a recession is, in fact, declared, can the Minister tell us if her department has a plan in place for how to help NWT businesses deal with that scenario? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I do appreciate the opportunity to speak to this question. I do hope that the members of the public and business are paying attention because, again, I know this can be a time with a lot of uncertainty. When there's uncertainty and volatility, it may mean businesses aren't making the investments that we want to see them making to have a robust and diversified economy in the North. So, again, I'll say something that I was saying a lot more back when the pandemic was in full force, which is that the public sector is larger in the territories than what it may be in some provincial areas. Now, there's downsides to that but one of the upsides to that it gives us a bit of stability. So we are certainly monitoring, again, not just as an academic way but to look at certain indicators, make sure that we are responsive and reactive where we need to be but, again, really it's -- at this point, Madam Speaker, I -- there's not a set plan because there's not a set emergency to which we need to respond. We are keeping an eye on what's happening and, again, trying to do things like pass a capital budget which would hopefully help support the small business sector through any times of uncertainty. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Members, we're going to take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 1278-19(2):
NEW MINIMUM WAGE APPROACH

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. First, I'd like to get some clarity on the basic principles of the new minimum wage approach announced in

August. Can the Minister tell us how poverty and a living wage were considered in the development of this new approach to a minimum wage? Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of ECE.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So a living wage reflects what an earner or earners would need to bring home to pay the bills in any given community. The minimum wage is the lowest possible wage that you can pay someone, and its purpose is to protect vulnerable workers. So they're two different things. So our minimum wage, it's similar to minimum wages across Canada. It's on the higher end. And the changes that we are making -- or that we have made would put us on an even playing field with the rest of Canada. And I will note that given the climate in the Northwest Territories, the employment climate, it's pretty rare to find someone earning minimum wage. And the Member himself said that it's hard to attract employees if you're only paying the minimum wage. So this minimum wage is a bare minimum that you are legally required to pay but the market is dictating higher wages than that. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente. I want to thank the Minister for recognizing that the minimum wage is not a living wage, and it keeps people in poverty. So through the work of the minimum wage committee and ECE analysts, you know, there's a lot of information that's been compiled. I also put together this percentage. 90 percent of our workforce received a wage top-up program because of how low our minimum wage actually is here. So can the Minister commit to developing and regularly update an actual living wage for each of the 33 NWT communities? Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I can't commit to that. I know there are organizations who do look at the living wage in different communities, and we're going to let them continue to do that good work. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente. I want to thank the Minister for recognizing the work of lowly NGOs and getting them to do the work of government again. So one of the reasons the Minister keeps giving for a minimum wage -- keeping minimum wage so low is the impact of a higher wage on small businesses, and the Minister just said that few businesses pay the minimum wage. So can the Minister tell us whether this government is considering a further package of wage top-ups

for low income workers to lift these people out of poverty? Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. No, the wage top-up was primarily driven by the federal government and we are not considering that. We are trying to get people out of poverty through employment programs, through education. And I will say that we do actually have a number of labour programs, some of which provide wage top-ups. So we are doing a bit of what the Member is talking about but we are not looking at rolling out the large scale program similar to the ones the federal government funded in the last couple years. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Final supplementary. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente. I want to thank the Minister for that. Well, let's talk about some systemic change here, then. So in our current inflationary situation, price increases have been highest on mandatory costs, including food and shelter, rather than discretionary purchases, meaning poor people suffer more from inflation. So will the Minister take this affordability crisis as the opportunity to construct lasting measures, like a guaranteed basic income, that directly addresses the cost of living? Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. And we won't be implementing a guaranteed basic income during the life of this Assembly. We do have a number of very expensive initiatives that we are currently working on and will be bringing forward. So we are making investments in this area, making investments to reduce the cost of living. But a guaranteed basic income is not one of those. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1279-19(2):
WINTER CAMPING

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of ITI who is responsible for our beautiful 33 camps and parks -- campgrounds and parks across this territory. And my question is whether she's going to let me go winter camping this winter? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I would be

very happy if the Member would like to go winter camping. I'm not a barrier to him going winter camping. What I can't do is necessarily open up a park, bring in park staff, bring in cleaning staff, bring in the enforcement and monitoring officers to make sure that parks don't get wrecked, although I'm sure the Member wouldn't do that. I can't commit to doing all of that and to expending those resources on his behalf. But I'd be very happy to hear if he goes out into the wilderness, onto the land, and takes pictures to promote tourism in the North. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm actually not sure that's legal, and I believe the Department of Lands is working on temporary guidelines when temporary structures can be set up on public land. But they first have to evict 900 people. So I'm not too sure about that. I guess my question is, I assume that we own some wall tents. We own a company that makes them at the very least. I assume we own a few cabins in the territorial government. Is the Minister willing to look through all of our parks and campgrounds and see whether there is some sort of infrastructure that could possibly be rented out under the NWT Parks banner? I think it would be a great tourism activity. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I certainly can make a commitment to go and see what might be available. What I might also suggest, though, Madam Speaker, is perhaps an opportunity for the Member, who I know is passionate about this particular issue, to check in with myself and with the department and perhaps also NWT Tourism. There are a number of private operators would like to get into this space. There may be access to parks facilities but, again, they may require further capital costs to be where the Member wants them to be. But let's get to the heart of what the issue and what the barriers are. I'd like to not be a barrier to the private sector. But if there's a way to get more people accessing the lands, then I'd be thrilled to find a way to do that. So, again, perhaps a takeaway isn't just for us but it's to go with the Member and see exactly where are the gaps that we aren't filling for this sector. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

QUESTION 1280-19(2):
EDUCATION CURRICULUM

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Maybe I'll be able to score points since my colleague from Kam Lake could not. Madam Speaker, can the Minister explain how the What We Heard report encouraged him to choose a phase 2 approach to modernizing the Education Act? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister of ECE.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So first, I'd like to correct a few of the statements that the Member made in her record-setting five and a half minute Member's statement today.

She stated the Education Act had not changed in 30 years. It was changed last year, unanimously by this House; changes to the Education Act were approved. We changed in 2017, 2014, 2013, 2006, 2005, and so on. And so this is not some unprecedented change that's happening. There are always amendments to the Education Act as are required by operational realities.

She stated that Indigenous governments have been provided no details on proposed changes. They've been provided the same details I've been provided.

She said we're not working with Indigenous governments. I've had meetings. I've discussed this with the council of leaders. I've discussed this at bilateral meetings with Indigenous governments. There's meetings with education bodies and ECE occurring. And so that includes the TCSA. There's a meeting this week between ECE and Tlicho government officials.

She said I don't know what changes that we need; I don't know what changes that we want to make. What we don't have is the exact wording of the changes, and that's because we have to work with the education bodies to determine that.

She said we're making governance changing by clarifying authorities of the Minister. We are not. We're clarifying the authorities of the Minister so that the Ministers can't go and do things -- try and do things beyond their authorities.

And she stated that the two-phase approach is divisive and recalls a path driven by privilege. And I'll say that's partially right. I'm privileged to be an Indigenous person who gets to make these changes for Indigenous students. So I'll say that, Madam Speaker. I don't think we need to lose sight of that. And this Assembly

as well, you know, there's a lot of Indigenous voices in this Assembly that are involved in this process. And that's why we're making these changes. And I'm not going to, you know, abandon making changes for Indigenous students just because it's unpopular. I have an opportunity to do it, and I'm going to do it.

And so in terms of the Member's direct question that she asked, why we went out with a two-phased approach, the reason is because we realized that -- and I realized, that we can't do this alone. We need to work together. We need to work with the Indigenous governments and the education bodies if we're going to revamp the Education Act. And that's what we're doing. In the meantime, I want to make some minor amendments so that things can operate more efficiently, and we can provide better services to students. And to do that, we'd have to get it done right away. Everyone here knows how the legislative process works. We have tight timelines, and we don't have the kind of timelines that would allow co-drafting. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you for the information. 1984 Alberta curriculum was introduced, because I know, I was there. So that's where I was referring to this as over 30 years, that it hasn't been -- it hasn't been changed. And then just recently last year, I know they were talking about it and this year they're -- we are adopting BC curriculum. So that's where -- that's what I was talking about, the legislations. So all the changes that he referred to he should share with us, put it in writing, and let the small communities in the region know about this because I just ask him a questions. Yes, I know he had the chance to say that so I guess that is okay. But this modernization Education Act is very important for us, and we've been saying it. It's not just me that's saying that here. Our leaders and other Indigenous leaders, and I'm surprised none of these from the outlying communities, the regions, MLAs are not saying anything. And the leaders have been saying it. Dene Nation have been saying it. That's why I am expressing. That's why I really do have a -- I do have an issue with this modernizing the Education Act. It would be nice if there were more MLAs that was speaking out. And I know some of the education system in the regional centre are better, are good. Like Fort Smith, they have the best education systems. Like Yellowknife, they have the best education systems. But not in the small communities. This is why I am really frustrated with what he said.

So with that, according to the NWT update of July 6th, 2022, phase 1 of the Education Act modernization address issues identified in the Office of the Auditor General audit, can the Minister explain how he prioritized the topics identified by Ottawa's Auditor General and those identified by the Indigenous government? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. I know discussions can get very heated and very personal in here -- Member. Order. I would like everybody to just keep your discussions respectful and your questions and comments to each other and direct them through me. Thank you. Minister of ECE.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So the changes that are being proposed, which have been shared with Indigenous governments and education bodies, were chosen because of the recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General, internal evaluations that ECE did, and discussions with education bodies. These are -- many of these are long-standing issues that, you know, we have an opportunity to clean up. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Yes. If it wasn't -- if it didn't happen in that order, I would not have said anything. But what is the Minister's vision of how the Education Act will reflect the GNWT's commitment to reconciliation if Indigenous governments are left out from designing the legislation's modernization? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So I think I've laid that vision out. If Indigenous governments were left out of the modernization of the Education Act, it would be a disaster. So that's why we are making these targeted operational technical amendments in the life of this Assembly, and then we'll deal with the other 99.999 percent of the Education Act in the next Assembly. And the work to begin developing an MOU between the GNWT and Indigenous governments is going to happen in the life of this Assembly. So we should have a signed MOU that will ensure that this work does happen. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: If he knows the detail, he should share it with us. That is why we are, you know -- that is why I am addressing this because there is something. They know something. They should share it with us. The Minister promises a phase 2 in which his department will collaborate with

Indigenous government, education bodies, and stakeholders. How is the Minister going to ensure that phase 2 will take place and proceed in a collaborative manner? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So as I've stated, we did -- we have shared the details. The department is now working with education bodies to come up with the specifics, and you know, what the wording might look like, and then that information will be shared. I've already made that commitment. So that will be done.

And in terms of how we're going to ensure that we work together, I answer that already with discussion about the MOU.

I hope we don't lose sight of the fact here that generally what happens with the non-land and resources legislation, as required under devolution, most legislation is not codeveloped with Indigenous governments. This government took the step of saying look, the Education Act is so important that we need to have a codevelopment process. Even though it's going to take who knows, a decade, we need to do it. It's going to take a lot of money. It's going to take a lot of time. But we're going to do it. And I think that is a huge step forward for reconciliation. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 52-19(2): SETTLEMENT MAINTAINERS TRAINING PROGRAM

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Speaker. Settlement maintainers are important service providers for all small communities because of the increased scope of their work and the lack of access to certified tradespeople in these communities:

Will the Minister on Infrastructure confirm the current number of indeterminate settlement maintainer positions, provide the number of settlement maintainers working in small communities, identify each community, and identify communities with vacancies?

1. Can the Minister of Infrastructure also commit in writing to working with the Housing NWT to adapt their housing maintainers training program for settlement maintainers to enhance training opportunities for settlement

maintainers seeking to work in remote communities?

2. Will the Minister of Infrastructure ensure that small community settlement and facilities maintainers have the option of receiving oil and heating technician training during their employment in order to perform basic heating equipment maintenance and repairs in situations where a steam ticket or other specialized certifications are not required?
3. Will the Minister of Infrastructure provide a detailed list of the current training opportunities offered to settlement maintainers during their employment as of November 2022?
4. Can the Minister commit in writing to ensuring new training is provided through an established institution such as at the Aurora College Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith, with theory classes as well as practical hands-on experience (for example, by adding on-the-job training, job shadowing, and/or apprenticeship opportunities)?

Mahsi.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Written questions. Member for Kam Lake.

WRITTEN QUESTION 53-19(2): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER CORPORATION TO FACILITATE ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation to facility alternative energy.

The Northwest Territories Power Corporation is a Crown corporation that owns and operates the Northwest Territories' hydroelectric facilities and most of the Northwest Territories' diesel power plants. NTPC is tasked to provide an essential service to Northwest Territories residents and businesses by ensuring access to reliable electricity. The Northwest Territories' energy mix includes fossil fuel, biomass, hydro, natural gas, wind and solar installations. In 25 remote communities, local grids provide diesel-generated electricity.

The GNWT's 2030 Energy Strategy and the NTPC's strategic and capital plans focus on lowering cost of power and increasing the use of alternative and renewable energy whenever possible. Implementing the 2030 Energy Strategy is a shared responsibility between the GNWT, the NTPC, and the Arctic Energy

Alliance. The NTPC commits its 2022-2023 Corporate Plan to increase integration of renewable technology and use of alternative fuels and achieve a 25 percent greenhouse gas emissions reduction for electricity generation in diesel-powered communities.

I submit the following questions to the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation:

1. Can the Minister explain how the NTPC will invest in alternative and renewable energy with a net debt of nearly \$366 million? Will funds be available to upgrade and purchase energy efficient diesel generators for communities when the increase in net debt for the one year alone is already about \$42 million?
2. Can the Minister provide the NTPC capital investment dollars invested on alternative and renewable energy in Northwest Territories communities, by community and contractor, and identify which of these will be impacted by sunseting federal funds?
3. During the life of this Assembly, has NTPC collected and reported on performance measurement results, and if yes, have trends been observed? And Can the Minister share the results, by community?
4. How does the NTPC increase alternative and renewable energy in housing? For example, what is NTPC doing to work with Housing Northwest Territories developers and Indigenous business development corporations? And,
5. The NTPC is governed by a board of GNWT deputy ministers who are familiar with the GNWT mandate and challenges. Can the Minister describe, with examples, how the change from an independent to a GNWT constituted governance board has improved or helped the work of the NTPC and what cost savings were realized as a result?

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Written questions. Tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

Tabling of Documents

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: It's just one of those days. Sorry, lots going on today. Returns to written questions. Replies to Commissioner's address. Petitions. Tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

TABLED DOCUMENT 766-19(2):
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 60:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE PETROLEUM
PRODUCTS AND CARBON TAX ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 767-19(2):
NWT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND
INVESTMENT CORPORATION ANNUAL
REPORT 2021-2022

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Like déjà vu, Madam Speaker. Thank you. Madam Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: The Plain Language Summary for Bill 60, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act; and, Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation 2021-2022 Annual Report. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. Member for Deh Cho.

TABLED DOCUMENT 768-19(2):
FRAMEWORK FOR DIABETES IN CANADA

TABLED DOCUMENT 769-19(2):
BILL C-237, AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A
NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR DIABETES

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Speaker. I wish to table the Framework for Diabetes in Canada, a publication of the Public Health Agency of Canada. And Madam Speaker, I wish to table Bill C-237, An Act to Establish a National Framework for Diabetes. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. Member for Yellowknife North.

TABLED DOCUMENT 770-19(2):
REDACTED REPORTS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE
AND EMPLOYMENT FROM THE INTERNAL
AUDIT BUREAU OBTAINED UNDER
ACCESS TO INFORMATION

TABLED DOCUMENT 771-19(2):
REDACTED REPORTS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS FROM THE
INTERNAL AUDIT BUREAU OBTAINED
UNDER ACCESS TO INFORMATION

TABLED DOCUMENT 772-19(2):
REDACTED REPORTS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND
NATURAL RESOURCES FROM THE
INTERNAL AUDIT BUREAU OBTAINED
UNDER ACCESS TO INFORMATION

TABLED DOCUMENT 773-19(2):
REDACTED REPORTS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE FROM THE
INTERNAL AUDIT BUREAU OBTAINED
UNDER ACCESS TO INFORMATION

TABLED DOCUMENT 774-19(2):
REDACTED REPORTS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE
FROM THE INTERNAL AUDIT BUREAU
OBTAINED UNDER ACCESS TO
INFORMATION

TABLED DOCUMENT 775-19(2):
REDACTED REPORTS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, TOURISM
AND INVESTMENT FROM THE INTERNAL
AUDIT BUREAU OBTAINED UNDER
ACCESS TO INFORMATION

TABLED DOCUMENT 776-19(2):
REDACTED REPORTS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FROM THE
INTERNAL AUDIT BUREAU OBTAINED
UNDER ACCESS TO INFORMATION

TABLED DOCUMENT 777-19(2):
REDACTED REPORTS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF LANDS FROM THE
INTERNAL AUDIT BUREAU OBTAINED
UNDER ACCESS TO INFORMATION

TABLED DOCUMENT 778-19(2):
REDACTED REPORTS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AND
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS FROM THE
INTERNAL AUDIT BUREAU OBTAINED
UNDER ACCESS TO INFORMATION

MR. JOHNSON: Madam Speaker, I wish to table the following documents: redacted reports for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment from the internal audit bureau obtained under Access to Information; redacted reports for the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs from the internal audit bureau obtained under Access to Information; redacted reports for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources from the internal audit bureau obtained under Access to Information; redacted reports for the Department of Finance from the internal audit bureau obtained under Access to Information; redacted reports for the Department of

Infrastructure from the internal audit bureau obtained under Access to Information; redacted reports for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment from the internal audit bureau obtained under Access to Information; redacted reports for the Department of Justice from the internal audit bureau obtained under Access to Information; redacted reports for the Department of Lands from the internal audit bureau obtained under Access to Information; and, redacted reports for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs from the internal audit bureau obtained under Access to Information.

Madam Speaker, I'd just like to say I hope the Minister can find a way to proactively disclose all of the great work that the internal audit bureau does so I never have to do this again. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Needed to give him a wheelbarrow. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Member for Kam Lake.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 68-19(2):
ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL
COMMITTEE ON TRANSITION MATTERS

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, November 3rd, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that pursuant to Rule 9.2(8), the Legislative Assembly hereby establish a special committee on transition matters;

And further, that the committee members be named to the special committee as follows:

- Mr. Kevin O'Reilly, Member for Frame Lake;
- The Honourable R.J. Simpson, Member for Hay River North;
- Mr. Rocky Simpson, Member for Hay River South;
- Ms. Lesa Semmler, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes;
- Ms. Jane Weyallon-Armstrong, Member for Monfwi; and,
- The Honourable Shane Thompson, Member for Nahendeh.

And furthermore, that the special committee on transition matters be established by the terms of reference identified as Tabled Document 765-19(2).

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Notice of motion. Member for Thebacha.

MOTION 69-19(2):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE
HOUSE TO FEBRUARY 7, 2023

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, November 3rd, I will move the following motion:

I move, second by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that when this House adjourns on Thursday, November 3rd, it shall be adjourned until Tuesday, February the 7th, 2023;

And furthermore, that at any time prior to February the 7th, 2023, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and the Members of the Legislative Assembly that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, or at a time later than the scheduled resumption of the House, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Notices of motion. Member for Thebacha.

MOTION 70-19(2):
AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTORAL
BOUNDARIES COMMISSION ACT

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, November 3rd, I will move the following motion:

Whereas this Legislative Assembly appointed an Electoral Boundaries Commission pursuant to section 2(1)(b) of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, on June 3rd, 2021;

And whereas the Electoral Boundaries Commission 2021 submitted its final report to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly on May 24th, 2022;

And whereas the Speaker tabled the final report on the Electoral Boundaries Commission 2021 on May 27th, 2022;

And whereas this House rejected the electoral boundaries recommended by the Electoral Boundaries Commission 2021 on October 18, 2022;

And whereas the current electoral boundaries result in continued under-representation of some Northwest Territories constituencies in this House;

And whereas there is a desire to review the names of certain electoral districts in the Northwest Territories;

Now therefore I move, second by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that the Legislative Assembly recommends that amendments to the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act be introduced during the life of this Legislative Assembly to:

- A. Allow for the establishment of an Electoral Boundaries Commission within 18 months after the date fixed for the return of the writs from the 2023 election and subsequently for each second succeeding general election; and.
- B. Increase the composition of future Electoral Boundaries Commissions from a chairperson and two other members to a chairperson and four other members.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Notices of motion. Member for Sahtu.

MOTION 71-19(2):
REAPPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HONOURS
AND ADVISORY COUNCIL

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, November 3rd, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that the following persons be recommended to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories for reappointment to the NWT Honours Advisory Council:

- Ms. Sabrina Broadhead of Hay River;
- Mr. Danny Gaudet of Deline; and,
- Ms. Anne Peters of Yellowknife.

And further, that the effective date of these appointments shall be communicated to the Commissioner by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Member for Yellowknife North.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 61:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE OMBUD ACT

MR. JOHNSON: Madam Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act, to be read for the first time.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act is deemed read the first time and is now ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 62:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE INCOME TAX ACT,
NO. 2

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 62, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act No. 2, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 62, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, is deemed read for the first time and is now ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

BILL 63:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL
LANGUAGES ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Madam Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act is deemed read for the first time and is now ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Member for Great Slave.

BILL 64:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
ACT, NO. 3

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 64, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act No. 3, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3) Bill 64, An Act to Amend the Legislative and Executive Council Act No. 3, is deemed read for the first time and is now ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 60:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE PETROLEUM
PRODUCTS AND CARBON TAX ACT,
CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 60, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act be read for the second time.

The bill amends the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act to update the carbon tax rates set out in the schedule. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Minister of Finance -- sorry, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. I rise to speak to the principle of Bill 60, the Act to Amend the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act.

The Finance Minister introduced this bill yesterday, and there was very little public information available on what it actually means. Like the original legislation that was passed narrowly in the last Assembly, this bill is a result of federal pressure and leadership on the climate crisis. This reflects an urgent need to speed up reductions of greenhouse gas emissions to save this planet. I support those federal efforts and a carbon tax in general but strongly reject Cabinet's approach on a carbon tax that will reward large emitters, basically the diamond mines and Imperial Oil at Norman Wells, and not mitigate the impacts on those communities that have the highest fuel costs.

This bill does nothing to address the failures of the legislation from the last Assembly that implemented a carbon tax. All this bill does is switch out the carbon pricing schedule and

tinker with vendor remittances of the carbon tax. The bill does not address the severe problems with a total lack of transparency and accountability in the collection and use of carbon taxes. The bill does nothing but continue to centralize all the power and authority over as yet undefined offsets, grants, and other measures into regulations and policies that remain difficult to understand and subject to the whims of Cabinet.

There is nothing in the original legislation, or this bill, that requires any separate accounting or even minimal public reporting on carbon taxes collected, how they are used, and the effectiveness of the regime in terms of greenhouse gas reductions.

The way the original legislation was drafted, and this new bill carries forward, Regular MLAs will not have the ability to make any changes. It's a "take it or leave it" approach, Madam Speaker. We must trust Cabinet to do the right things, but we have no way to hold them accountable. There is no requirement for public reporting, no separate accounting of funds collected or used, no input into regulations or policies. This is not consistent or reflective of what consensus government is supposed to be.

Some will ask why is Cabinet increasing carbon taxes now during a period of very high inflation? The easy answer is to blame the feds. The real answer is that Cabinet's approach to the climate crisis is failing, and failing dismally, and this new approach on a carbon tax appears to provide a convenient cover for this failure and pass it off as federal direction.

One needs to look no further than the 2030 Energy Strategy reports that show we cannot possibly reach the pan-Canadian framework target of a reduction in greenhouse gas reductions of 30 percent from 2005 emissions levels by 2030. That strategy was always founded on back-end loading of GHG reductions from the imaginary Taltson Hydro Expansion. Taltson expansion is not even economically viable without massive public subsidies and spending we cannot possibly afford.

The latest predictions of GHG emissions reductions to 2025 from the energy strategy report tabled in the House last week only get us to less than 10 percent of what is needed. How can we possibly make up the other 90 percent in the last five years? Even the feds recognize that Cabinet's approach is failing dismally and have required changes to the carbon tax to provide more incentives for greenhouse gas reductions. I've begged and

pleaded with Cabinet to change this approach from the last Cabinet, and they have done nothing to change it. It is destined for failure.

I hope that Cabinet might be convinced that climate change is indeed a crisis that we need to embrace change and the opportunities to build a greener and more just economy. We have only to look around at unprecedented flooding, permafrost degradation, and damage to infrastructure to know that the crisis is upon us right now. Rather than subsidizing large emitters, we must find ways to create jobs and greenhouse gas reductions through improved housing retrofits and build energy self-sufficiency at the household and community level.

But no, this Cabinet is stuck in a time warp where they continue to believe fossil fuel exploration and production will be the salvation for the NWT. Just look at the request for proposals issued this week for the capture, storage, and transportation of carbon dioxide resulting from oil and gas production. It's unbelievable, Madam Speaker.

Regular MLAs have been engaged with Cabinet since July 2022 posing questions, getting in-camera briefings, and receiving some rather confusing information on how the new approach to the carbon tax will be implemented. Unfortunately, we cannot share that information with the public and Cabinet has so far failed to provide much public information despite promises of robust public communications.

We know that measures must be introduced that at least meet federal requirements or the federal government's program standards, the backstop, will kick in.

As to our territorial measures, what can I say? What I can say is that the current exemption of heating fuel from carbon tax will end on April 1st, 2023, and there will be a standard across the board increase in a cost of living offset for individuals and families that file income tax returns. This will help some individuals. Those in communities with lower fuel costs may actually make some money. But those in the remotest communities will be hit hard, and the offset will not mitigate those impacts sufficiently in my opinion.

Large emitters, the diamond mines and Norman Wells operations, will continue to get most of their carbon taxes back from some mysterious new facility-based baseline. Small businesses, local governments, and non-governmental organizations will get nothing. Let me repeat that - will get nothing. There will be vague commitments of possible

programs to help other businesses reduce their fuel use. The subsidization and special treatment for the large emitters hardly seems fair. Of course all of this is subject to the whims of Cabinet discretion and secrecy.

I sent the Finance Minister 16 detailed questions on Cabinet's approach to the carbon tax on October 25th, well before the bill was introduced. I'm still waiting for answers, Madam Speaker.

I am going to summarize some of those questions here:

- What happens if this bill is not passed?
- With the continued large emitter 72 percent rebates, how is there an incentive to reduce GHG emissions?
- How and when will the large emitter rebates be reviewed and changed and will any of this information be made public?
- Was there any overall analysis, scenario work or modelling on the proposed new approach versus the federal backstop in terms of the following:
 - Amount of carbon taxes generated and from what sectors, businesses, families and individuals, remote versus urban areas;
 - Economic impacts of the new approach on carbon tax;
 - Predictions of fuel switching and energy conservation measures likely to be pursued and any resulting GHG emission reductions.
- Will any carbon tax revenue be shared with Indigenous governments or community governments such as the way the Yukon does this? And they're under the federal backstop.
- Why are the carbon tax revenues not set up as a separate or revolving fund to provide greater transparency and accountability through improved public reporting and targeting of their use?
- Have any large emitters ever accessed the grant program? If not, why not?

- Were the guidelines for the use of the individualized accounts ever changed or adjusted? If not, why not?
- What regulations need to be changed to implement the new approach?
- What specific changes will be made?
- Will there be an opportunity for public comment on proposed changes?
- Having a standard cost of living does not seem fair and may even allow some residents to profit from this mechanism. Is there not some other way to provide a fairer offset based on actual fuel use or cost to give some relief in the high-cost regions?

Madam Speaker, I'm profoundly disappointed at the lack of analysis and sharing of information from Cabinet on this new approach to the carbon tax and cannot support it as presented to date. It's part of an overall climate change initiative that is not integrated and clearly doomed to failure. If there's one thing we know it's that we must convince the public of the urgent need of confronting this crisis and to get on board. There's no attempt to get the public on side with Cabinet's new approach.

So what are we to do with a bill that concentrates power in Cabinet with little to no transparency and accountability for an approach that treats some much better than others and thus is patently unfair?

We cannot even make basic changes to the bill. Regular MLAs and the public have not been provided with basic information on alternatives, options, and analysis of impacts.

If the bill passes second reading, it can go to a standing committee where public input and questions can be gathered and recommendations can be made. But there will not be any way to change the bill. The review could also provide an opportunity for a closer look at the federal backstop and how it has been used and adjusted in other jurisdictions, including the Yukon and Nunavut, in creative ways that seem to have escaped our Cabinet. My heart tells me to kill the bill but my mind says that we need to study alternatives because Cabinet has not or is not willing to share that information with us.

For that reason alone, I will vote to send this bill to committee for review. Cabinet in no way should take my vote as support for this approach or that I condone in any way how this has rolled out. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. To the principle of the bill. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I too have a lot of concern about this bill. I understand where the Minister of Finance is at and that we have a federal obligation that we need to meet and that we really have no choice in putting forth something. If we don't put this bill forward, then we end up defaulting with what Canada decides for us and we often know that Ottawa does not make the right decisions for us here in the North.

Where I have concern is that often things are imposed upon our citizens when after -- and then they're given a rebate or some sort of offset after the fact. However, in looking at this, I have a lot of concern that the cost of living offset that is going to be provided will not in any way make up for the increased cost of living, and especially the cost of heating that's coming for our people over the next several years.

I also think there is sort of an assumption at times that everybody is living in a dual income family here in the Northwest Territories and that they can absorb these types of costs because they're making \$250,000 to \$300,000 a year. Well, I can tell you as a single person, my costs, my bills, everything is going up and up and up and I don't have a second person with which to share all of those costs with. So I'm concerned for myself personally.

When I went to COP, to the climate change conference with the Minister of ENR, our messaging was very clear to Canada, that we could not afford to pay for Canada's promises when it came to climate change legislation. And here we are. We're literally going to be paying for Canada's promise. And when we ask about what can be done, the answer is that, you know, the way that the federal law is being rolled out is that the government can't give us any sort of, you know, break on this type of payment because of the fact that the whole reason for this fee is to create a penalty-type regime which will force people to use less fossil fuels; however, we don't have that luxury in the Northwest Territories to use less fossil fuels.

So you know what I'm going to do this winter, Madam Speaker, or when this gets passed, is I'm going to be sitting in more sweaters; I'm going to be under blankets; I'm going to be trying to figure out ways that I can make my bills go down while I deal with the municipal tax hike, while I deal with the increasing cost of power, while I deal with increasing costs for my gasoline, while insurance is rising, while

my house is falling apart, municipal taxes, everything. So I really don't see a solution here so I'm just kind of getting up and speaking more about what the problem is. But the problem is huge, and our people they cannot handle this. The everyday resident that does not work for the GNWT cannot afford this. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. To the principle of the bill. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, my first instinct is to not support this bill to move past second reading, but I am going to; I want to first tell you why.

First, I want to tell you why my instinct is to not support it. The cost of living in the Northwest Territories is suffocating many NWT residents. Everyone is feeling it. Between the added cost of inflation, supply chain, energy, food, health, and housing, the people I serve are feeling the added financial pressures that come with living in the Northwest Territories. Over the last year this territory has seen rate increases from NTPC, threat of removal of supplementary health benefits, increases to municipal taxes, as well as the added inflation in cost of living squeezes that are happening globally as well. It's as if every decision that impacts the cost of living is happening in a vacuum rather than considering the increasing of cost elsewhere in the system, and it's all connected. So quite clearly, Madam Speaker, NWT residents cannot afford increased costs.

Last week in this House, the Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources said, quote, "climate change is one of the most complex and far-reaching issues facing the Northwest Territories today. Despite being responsible for less than 0.2 percent of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, the Northwest Territories is experiencing rates of climate warming up to four times faster than the rest of Canada. This affects all aspects of our way of life. It is a serious threat to the economy, our socio-economic, cultural, and environmental health as well as residents", end quote.

This bears repeating, Madam Speaker, so I'm going to repeat it: The NWT is responsible for less than 0.2 percent of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, and I hope the federal government hears that too.

According to the federal government, carbon pricing is about recognizing the cost of pollution and accounting for those costs in daily decisions. But here in the NWT, using fossil fuels is largely the only decision as I

spoke to today in my Member's statement. Madam Speaker, it's a Northerner's double jeopardy - charged by NTPC for using their expensive aging infrastructure and then charged by the federal government through carbon tax for using our energy monopoly.

With rising costs of diesel and northern cost of living, NWT residents should have a clearer outlook of how the territory will add renewable energy sources and reduce the NWT dependency on diesel. But we don't. So the people of the Northwest Territories are being taxed for not making a choice that isn't in their hands.

But, Madam Speaker, I want to clarify why I am supporting the bill to move through second reading today. The Carbon Tax Program was introduced in 2018 as a "take it or take it" initiative directed by the federal government. The GNWT was originally given the option of signing on to the federal backstop or a made-in-the-NWT solution. The GNWT opted for a made-in-the-NWT solution whereas both Nunavut and Yukon opted for the federal backstop. But without moving this bill through second reading, I do not get answers to my questions, and I do not know what the federal backstop would look like here in the Northwest Territories and what option would better serve Northerners particularly when it comes to cost of living.

I want to ensure I am making an informed decision for the people that I serve. I look forward to reviewing the bill with committee and stakeholders and being able to publicly report the finer details of what this and other options might mean for the Northwest Territories and to make recommendations of how we can collectively better serve the residents of our territory. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. To the principle of the bill. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I can't support the bill, because of the cost of living that's going to affect my riding. I'll support it going to -- into the second reading but the Minister has to hold the line with our federal government, Madam Speaker, in regards to holding that and working with this side of the House to get a tiered system. We have to have more control and we give so little, you know, offsets that we're getting with the federal government. I mean, the cost of NTPC, the power bills, and it affects so many with the cost of fuel. It's going to affect our housing. Even the people that are living in Housing houses. It's going to affect the Housing Corporation to do the work that

they're supposed to do. So there's too many questions that we haven't asked -- that's been asked in regards on this side of the House. But for myself, the rising cost, the carbon tax, and especially the cost of living offset, we're already paying so much in the territory. It has to go to a tiered system before I could support something like this. But, again, the small communities in the Beaufort Delta across the territory are going to be paying this carbon tax. We should be going -- I guess you look at the news today, Madam Speaker, that Nunavut went to one payment across the board, right across the whole of Nunavut of paying their power rates all the same. So we got to be looking at something like that where it's right across the territory, not singling out small communities and punishing them for living there. And thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. To the principle of the bill. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I just wanted to make a few comments about the bill. I am very much live to the criticisms and concerns that are being raised here. They certainly were raised when we had the opportunity to appear in front of committee. And in my view, Madam Speaker, this is a good opportunity. This is one of those times where in consensus government the ability to put forward a bill that does have contentious elements to it, elements that are challenging, that are not easily resolved, going through the second reading and going through the committee process, in my view, Madam Speaker, will actually be to the benefit of this bill.

This was a circumstance where, because of the nature of the situation we were in as placed by the federal government, made it difficult to get information out in advance. The Department of Finance was in discussions with Environment and Climate Change Canada right up until August, which didn't give a lot of runway to go back to committee.

I can say, Madam Speaker, also that, again, there's a real challenge in figuring out the best possible solution in a situation we have been put in. The thing we cannot do, unfortunately, is any sort of negation of the price signal. That's the federal system. So it's the federal government that have taken away that ability to be more nuanced, more targeted in the types of rebates that we offer. By not being allowed to negate the price signal, what that means is that you can't have an at-source rebate anymore, because you're negating that immediate price signal change that you'd

have. You cannot have the fuel use rebates. So you can't go to someone's House and say well, this household uses more fuel, this one uses less; the one that uses more gets a bigger rebate. That is considered to be negating the price signal. So that puts us in that difficult of position. Do we make one equitable -- or equal -- not equitable -- one equal payment for all, or is there a way that we can be looking at regional -- you know, regional differences.

So, again, I've already asked that we go back and look at some form of regional difference, not use the equal approach that we have, always mindful that if we don't achieve something that keeps us within the federal parameters, we do wind up going to the federal system.

Madam Speaker, again, it'll be certainly open to committee to consider, you know, simply whether or not this is an approach they want to go to. I will say for the moment, Madam Speaker, the bill is presented as it is keeping us in the made-in-the-North approach because that approach provides flexibility to the Northwest Territories. That approach allows us to provide rebates in some form or fashion. There's no guarantee what the federal system may or may not do. It allows us to provide a rebate system for our industry that is reflective of our industry, specifically, Madam Speaker, the large emitters; namely, the three diamond mines would pay less if they were under the federal system - the output-based pricing system. Under this system, they pay more but they do get the remitter rebate program where they would have the opportunity to access funds to reduce their GHG emissions. And at this point, Madam Speaker, it provides them certainty on what that's going to look like and not have to change systems. And it also allows us, again, Madam Speaker, the flexibility to look at future development and what that might be, which might not be the same as the large remitters we have today. The federal system isn't going to give us that flexibility. So a number of reasons that I'd like to keep us in that made-in-the-North approach, but the made-in-the-North approach, like many other things in the North, can be flexible; it can be adaptable; and it can be a product of consensus government. So there's no reason to think that there can't still be modifications to this bill.

I do appreciate, as I say, my colleagues' comments. I do hope that committee can look at ways to better be more responsive to the needs of residents, in particular, who are facing the costs -- the rising costs that will result from that and if the approach of being

equitable across the board is not one that is considered to be the best, I do look forward to having that conversation in some further detail working with the Department of Finance to see what we can do to keep ourselves within the box that the federal government has created for us but one that still gives us the flexibility and the room within that from using a made-in-the-North approach. So I do look forward to this process. I hope my colleagues do take it out for their process, and we'll move forward from there. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. To the principle of the bill. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I too don't like the Carbon Tax Act, and I know it's being kind of shoved down the throats of all Northerners. The most vulnerable population are the ones that are going to be affected by this mostly, and everybody in the Northwest Territories. And I'm willing to go with the second reading but I have a lot of -- a lot of situations within my own constituency that are pending, and one of the ones is the -- you know, the Public Utilities Board is doing a review of electricity in the community of Thebacha. And we have the NTPC expansion project near our constituency and yet they want to increase our rates by 20 percent over two years. And those are unreasonable wants by the NTPC board and the NTPC establishment. And, you know, but I also am in favour of greener energy and there's no more greener energy than hydro. And that expansion is going to be good for the whole Northwest Territories, including Yellowknife.

I don't understand how some of my colleagues could talk about environment and all these other things and not understand that the best energy possible, for greener energy, is hydro; not all these other things that come about with the mini whatever. Those end up costing more. You either do it on a big scale and look after everyone or you don't do it at all. And that's the way I feel. And we have to be also considerate with the, you know, talk about larger remitters. A lot of those larger remitters are employing a lot of people in this territory. And, you know, we have to be open for business. We're never going to balance any budgets here or anything else if we are not open for business. The business community is suffering in the Northwest Territories. And, you know, we always -- it's easy to criticize larger business, medium businesses, and smaller businesses. And, you know, we have to see -- look over -- have a look overall at what we're deciding when we're considering this

Carbon Tax Act. And I know that it's not good for no one. And how we can get that message across to our federal partners is something we're going to have to look at. And, you know, the Minister mentioned something about having a look at some of the conditions and relaying those messages, and I think those messages have got to be relayed, because it's a major problem for each and everybody in this room, outside our -- all of our people that we represent and especially the vulnerable population. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. To the principle of the bill. Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I too will not support this carbon tax, you know, especially now, especially now with my constituent -- many of my constituents are struggling as it is, with high cost of living and with fuel price increase in many of the small communities. So there is a lot of struggling happening right now. I know that. I am aware of that because I come from a community -- from small communities -- from a small community in the region. So this is an additional burden for my people so I will not support this carbon tax at the moment. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining?

The motion is carried. Bill 60 has had second reading and is referred to standing committee for further consideration.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Bill 23, Bill 29, Committee Report 36-19(2), Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Tabled Document 681-19(2), Tabled Document 694-19(2), Tabled Document 723-19(2), Tabled Document 747-19(2), and Tabled Document 748-19(2).

And Members, by the authority given to me by Motion 1-19(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hours of adjournment to consider the business before the House. Member for Deh Cho in the chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Mr. Chair. Committee wishes to deal with Committee Report 36-19(2), Tabled Document 747-19(2), Tabled Document 748-19(2). Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, committee. We will take a short recess and resume with the first item. Mahsi.

---SHORT RECESS

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Committee, we have agreed to consider Committee Report 36-19(2): Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2020-2021 Public Accounts. I will go to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations for any opening comments. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Committee Report was read into the record Friday, October 28th, 2022. The Standing Committee on Government Operations has reviewed the report on the 2020-2021 Public Accounts.

On December 8th, 2021, the Minister of Finance tabled the 2020-2021 Public Accounts. The public accounts are financial statements that show the financial results of the Government of the Northwest Territories for a given year. Each year, the Standing Committee on Government Operations reviews the public accounts. These reviews assess the credibility of the government's financial position and provide accountability for the government's financial results. Put differently, these reviews matter because they ask whether public money was spent prudently and as intended by the Legislative Assembly.

On June 29th, 2022, the committee held the public portion of its review. The committee received briefings from officials at the Office of the Auditor General and the Office of the Comptroller General. Their input was valuable to identify and clarify key issues.

In response, committee developed eight substantive recommendations to improve financial practices and reporting. These recommendations seek to achieve three goals:

1. Understand and address NTHSSA's growing deficit;
2. Enhance disclosure on environmental liabilities, resource revenues, and tangible capital assets; and

3. Make fiscal reporting more timely, frequent, comparable, and digital.

The committee is pleased to submit this report to the Legislative Assembly and looks forward to its consideration. Individual Members may have comments on the report, and I would like to thank the committee and the continued work by the department to improve the public accounts and the Office of the Auditor General for all of their work on this report. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. I will now open the floor for general comments on the Committee Report 36-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2020-2021 Public Accounts. Any Members? Not seeing any comments, Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 322-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF THE 2020-2021 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS –
DETAILED REPORTING AND ANALYSIS OF
COST DRIVERS,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services provide detailed reporting and analysis on each cost driver of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority's persistent operating deficit;

And further, the analysis should quantify how each driver contributes to NTHSSA's operating deficit,

And furthermore, the analysis should quantify, break down, and explain for each driver the difference between.

1. Budgeted expenses, positions, and programs; and
2. Actual results.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. In the NTHSSA -- well, we know their deficit is growing and in the NTHSSA's annual report they tell you some of the cost drivers but they don't necessarily quantify each one of them. We know, for example, overtime is the largest driver of the deficit but we don't know the exact figure. That's not publicly reported. And then we also don't know exactly how much is

budgeted for overtime for different parts of the authority and then how much the actual costs are. So I think for each of those individual cost drivers, some better reporting is needed and perhaps some analysis at the end of the day of, you know, if you were consistently going over budget on one of those drivers, whether that warrants an actual budget increase or whether there are solutions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 323-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF THE 2020-2021 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS –
NTHSSA INTERNAL CONTROLS,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends the Department of Health and Social Services disclose its response to the Office of the Auditor General's 2020-2021 audit observation that many areas of the internal controls need improvement at Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority;

And further, the department should also disclose its action items, progress on those action items, and timelines to improve internal controls. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 324-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF THE 2020-2021 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS –
ENHANCED REPORTING ON GNWT
ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITIES,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Finance provide a plan with timelines to enhance reporting on the Government of the Northwest Territories environmental liabilities dashboard by matching reporting practices in the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's federal contaminated sites inventory. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. The motion is in order. To the motion? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Mr. Chair. So I guess Department of Finance has launched this online -- I think it's an inventory, really, rather than a data base of contaminated sites, and that's a step forward. At least they've identified where these sites are and there's a little bit of background information. But there's no cost figures; there's no real tracking of progress in terms of assessing the risk at those sites and whether any remediation needs to take place. And, you know, if you go to the federal contaminated sites inventory, it's maintained by the federal, the treasury board. There's a remarkable level of detail for sites all across Canada that are the responsibility of various different agencies and you can sort is the data by region or by the authority that is responsible for the site, by time. It's an amazing database. And I'm not saying that we need to get there right away but I've been raising this issue for seven years. And at least we have some sort of an online database now but it needs to be populated with actual details of information. So that's what this recommendation is aimed towards, and it's really about greater transparency and accountability and making sure that these kind of liabilities are properly tracked and the public knows about them. So I look forward to a response from the department on how they're going to improve that database over time to get us up closer to where the federal government has been for years and other jurisdictions as well. The Yukon has their own inventory that contains significantly more information and data than ours. So we can and should be doing a lot better. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): All right. No further questions on this? The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 325-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF THE 2020-2021 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS –
DETAILED RESOURCE REVENUE DATA,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends the Department of Finance provide more detailed resource revenue data on gross amounts received and calculations of amounts retained;

And further, this enhanced reporting should separate annual aggregate values from petroleum, mineral resources, and each other type of resource revenues. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess this one I think gets a little bit close to a big conversation we've been having around royalty disclosures and whether or not this would include private information of private businesses. I guess that would lead me to want more information on exactly what "detailed resource revenue data" means and therefore I will not support this part of the motions. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So if you actually read the report from the committee, it provides the rationale for this recommendation. You know, the public accounts indicate that in 2020-2021, the GNWT collected \$66 million in resource revenues but there's no note with that line item. There's a bit of a break down between minerals gross money -- its gross amount of minerals, oil, and gas royalties, licenses, rentals, and other fees, and then quarry fees. So it doesn't even indicate through a note that this is actually a gross amount. This is not very

transparent reporting of revenues to our government. And that's what this recommendation is actually aimed at, is making sure that people actually understand what the government revenues are from the resources that are taken away from here. And, you know, I've had an ongoing exchange with the Minister of Finance and her staff about what that line item actually includes, and as I understand it, there was federal money that we get from the royalties collected at Norman Wells that are included in this amount, half the revenues actually go back to the federal government according to the devolution agreement, then, you know, a quarter of the remaining amount goes to the Indigenous governments that signed on to the devolution agreement. This is pretty complicated stuff, Mr. Chair.

So, you know, the public, they see this figure of \$66 million and think well, that's great, that's what we get from resource revenues. That's not, and it's not a net amount either. So what this is really aimed at is improving the transparency of this reporting so that the public actually sees what the gross amount is, and there's a calculation of what the net amount is. This is not about what individual companies report or how they file their royalty returns with the Minister of ITI. This is about the transparency of revenues to government. So I -- you know, it's done a lot better in many other jurisdictions, and that's what this is aimed at doing, is making sure that the residents of the Northwest Territories, when they pick up the public accounts they actually understand what those figures really mean. So I fully support this and look forward to a response from the Minister of Finance on how we can improve this. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. The motion is in order. Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: I'm just going to speak for -- I just want clarity on the motion. The revenue -- the resource revenue sharing with intergovernmental council that signed on to devolution, is that part of this motion? Because there's an agreement with intergovernmental council of the Indigenous groups that signed on to devolution. That's a situation that was privately done with the federal government and with territorial before devolution took place, and I don't think that is something that has to be shared with the public. It was because it was part of devolution, and the Indigenous governments had a right to that. And so I'm just wondering for clarity is that part of what is being discussed in this particular part of this committee motion?

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess -- so I may be mistaken, but it is my understanding is that it is already public how much each Indigenous government is currently getting of royalties under the devolution agreement. I believe that is already disclosed. But I should clarify that this committee report, regardless, is not asking the public accounts to break that down by Indigenous government and is not asking us to break down the number by what individual mining companies or oil and gas companies or quarry companies pay. That is a separate debate, and it's not our intention. The intention was simply to show that 25 percent of 50 percent is what goes to Indigenous governments and that the GNWT takes that remaining amount. So just a note clarifying how the formula works. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. Ms. Martselos, anything further?

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I mean I know that -- I know for a fact that it's not reported now what each Indigenous government receives, and that's an agreement with the Indigenous governments with intergovernmental council. So I just want to make that very clear. I'll be supporting the motion. I just wanted clarity, okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi for that. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining?

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 326-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF THE 2020-2021 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS –
TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS WITH ZERO
BOOK VALUE,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the comptroller general add to the financial statement discussion and analysis section of the public accounts information on the tangible capital assets with zero book value and provide a

timeline for implementation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to explain what this is actually asking. We just want a piece of information, which is presently when all GNWT's tangible capital assets are amortized over their expected life cycle, and in theory what that means is that you know when you have to replace it and then you budget accordingly. But it's quite clear that -- well, we all know that our infrastructure's in pretty rough shape so a lot of it has been completely amortized and is noted on our books as being "worth" zero dollars, and I would like to know what that total figure is, or committee thinks it would be a helpful figure to know. And in theory what that number means is that if it's a billion dollars, you have \$1 billion worth of infrastructure that is overdue or that is passed its expected life cycle. And I imagine that if you took all of the Power Corp's infrastructure and all the GNWT's infrastructure, it's probably over a billion, but that number is not disclosed. So committee is recommending that be included. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 327-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF THE 2020-2021 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS –
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS RELEASE DATE,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Finance amend the Financial Administration Act, section 35, to move the required release date of the public accounts by three months, from December 31st to September 30th. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A number of jurisdictions publish their public accounts before us, as noted in the committee report. I just want to comment that although I do think this should be changed in the legislation, it will take some years to get there. You have to work with the Office of the Auditor General, all of the departments, to make sure we can move our public accounts back. There are some departments, the power corp, the health authority who are notoriously late in getting their financial statements in. There is also a number of subsidiaries we own, you know, things like McPherson Tent and Canvas which then get their own individual audit and then get rolled up. So there's kind of this process that needs to occur before the public accounts that every single entity everywhere gets its audit complete and its financials done. So there is a big chain of information that flows up. But we think with a coordinated effort, we can stop seeing people be late in their accounting and eventually move this up to three months. So I encourage the department to amend the act and then probably give a little timeline for implementation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 328-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF THE 2020-2021 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS –
QUARTERLY IN-YEAR FISCAL REPORTS,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Finance take steps to publish in-year fiscal reports on a quarterly basis within a month and provide a timeline for implementation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 329-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF THE 2020-2021 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS –
DIGITIZATION OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Finance take steps to digitize the public accounts and provide a timeline for implementation and anticipated costs;

And further, the digitized presentation of financial results should align with the administrative, economic, functional, and program classifications used in the budget and main estimates documents. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 322-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF THE 2020-2021 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS –
GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO
RECOMMENDATIONS,
CARRIED

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. Johnson. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

All right, thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Committee Report 36-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2020-2021 Public Accounts?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of Committee Report 36-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2020-2021 Public Accounts. Mahsi.

We will now consider Tabled Document 747-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2022-2023. Does the Minister of Finance have any opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, if I could just confirm first, so we're doing infrastructure expenditures. I have it as 747-19(2)?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Okay, we're on the right one. Okay, good.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: So, Mr. Chair, with respect to the Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), I am happy to present these here to the House. These estimates propose a total decrease of \$59.8 million comprised of the following:

- First, a net decrease of \$108.9 million to adjust infrastructure project cash flows to realign the appropriations with the anticipated project schedules. These amounts are fully offset by appropriations in prior or future fiscal years.
- Second, \$48.1 million to provide funding for community government infrastructure projects under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan and Small Community Fund. Both these are fully offset by revenues from the federal government; and,
- Finally, \$1 million in support of the advancement of eligible projects under the COVID-19 resilience stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program supporting public building ventilation improvements to reduce the

transmission of airborne illnesses. These projects are fully offset by revenues from the federal government.

That concludes opening remarks, Mr. Chair. I am happy to answer questions the committee may have.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, please, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses into the chamber. Would the Minister please introduce her witnesses.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, on my right I have deputy minister of finance Bill MacKay, and on my left the assistant deputy minister Terence Courtoreille.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): All right. I've been asked to take a brief recess for a moment.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): I will now open the floor for general comments from the Members. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So I think the Minister mentioned in her opening remarks that there's a cash flowing forward of a number of infrastructure projects, and I'm furiously trying to get the actual document in front of me, but can the Minister explain why it was necessary to cash flow this money forward? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there's -- I mean, there's different reasons that would attach to different individual projects, but fundamentally what we've asked departments to do was to look at the state or the progress of an individual project and determine whether or not the project would be proceeding in this specific fiscal year, and if not, that's when you would make an adjustment. And rather than waiting until the end of the fiscal year and having it all come forward next spring, this -- by doing it now just, you know, again allows better reporting back to the House and a better plan hopefully for the next -- for the coming spring year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks, Mr. Chair. So does this have anything, then, to do with our overbudgeting for capital that's happened over a number of years where, you know, we've been carrying forward 50 percent of the capital funds from year to year because with we just can't get the money out the door; there's not enough people to do the work, whatever? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, I wouldn't necessarily characterize it entirely as that. Again, there's -- there is a new approach that we are using for the coming fiscal year, and that approach is meant to look -- you know, to bring a bit of that planning more strictly in at the front end. But there's going to still be occasions where projects don't advance for a variety of valid and reasonable reasons. But, you know -- so, again, I wouldn't necessarily characterize it all as that. But this review does give an opportunity to, at this point, again, bring it forward now rather than waiting until the spring. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Mr. Chair. So I think now that I've got this up in front of me, I can see where some of these money -- so there's a lot of money being carried forward for some rather large mega-projects, things like the Fort Providence transmission line, the Whati transmission line. What does this do to the scheduling of these projects? And, you know, say the -- maybe the greenhouse gas reductions that these projects were supposed to deliver as part of the energy strategy, how does this affect the scheduling of all of this stuff? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think I'm going to start -- I want to say I'll start at the back end of the questions first. With respect to any greenhouse gas reductions that are perhaps, you know, our hope to flow from projects, obviously it is, you know, an unknown at this point what would necessarily be the actual final changes to greenhouse gas emissions and there could be other factors at play in that regard such as, you know, weather or other reductions that might be taking place for other reasons associated. Now that said, as to the timing, it's just to be -- to be certain, these projects where

there's money moving into the next fiscal it's because they did not advance in 2022-2023 and the money is moving -- generally moving forward into 2023-2024 so that the project is reflective of when it is likely to advance. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Mr. Chair. So is it the federal government's fine with us just pushing forward all of this money into future years and not delivering them by the dates that were promised? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So Mr. Chair, there -- I mean, the short answer is yes. But I'd like to just turn it over to deputy minister on that front. There were conversations had not only with Department of Finance but the Department of Infrastructure as well, and the deputy minister might be better placed to just give a bit of assurance in that regard. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MR. MacKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to give a little more detail on that, we did have discussions with the federal government, specifically Infrastructure Canada, and they had extended the timeline on those projects to 2033. So that's within our expected timeline to finishing those projects. So we have worked with the federal government to ensure that that federal funding continues to flow within the new timeline. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So is all of this stuff in compliance with the fiscal responsibility policy? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, at this point it's still in compliance, Mr. Chair. I mean, again, it's the actuals that we see -- the actuals that we'd be getting numbers on in the fall is by the way in which you would measure whether or not you're in compliance with fiscal responsibility policy. But at this point, Mr. Chair, these changes are. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So are all of these projects, you know, cropping up again in the 2023-2024 Capital Estimates? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I want to make sure I have not missed anything. Perhaps I'll turn it over to the deputy minister or assistant deputy minister just to confirm where they may fall in our new year capital planning, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MR. MacKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So as the Minister noted before, this negative supplementary appropriation is intended to make sure that the capital budget for this current year is -- or that this year is reflective of what will actually be spent and then the capital estimates will give future years. And so these projects are within that new capital estimates or revised capital estimates that are currently tabled in the ledge. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, okay, thanks. Look, I'll cut this short. I think that this is probably better financial management but it still reflects our overspending on -- not overspending, over budgeting of capital and we just -- we, for a whole variety of different reasons, just can't get the money out the door. We can't get the work done, whether it's COVID, whether, you know, there's no contractors available to do the work, whatever, you know, supply chain delays, maybe there's not enough folks in procurement services to get this stuff out. I have no sense of that. But I think this is just a reflection of, again, our over budgeting on capital which means we have to set aside more money to get an operating surplus so there's less money for programs and services to meet people's basic needs. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Any further general comments?

Seeing none, seeing no further questions on the general comments, we will review the supplementary estimates by department and activity. Does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Committee, we will begin on page 5, Department of Infrastructure, operations

expenditures, energy and strategic initiatives, not previously authorized, negative \$29,736,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Department of Infrastructure, operations expenditure, total department, not previously authorized, negative \$29,736,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Committee, we will turn to page 6, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, community operations, not previously authorized, \$48,106,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$48,106,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Committee, we will turn to page 7, Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, junior kindergarten to grade 12 school services, not previously authorized, negative \$400,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, negative \$400,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Committee, we will turn to page 8.

Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, health and social programs, not previously authorized, negative \$1,578,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, long-term and continuing care services, not previously authorized, negative \$3,718,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$5,296,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Committee, we will turn to pages 9 and 10. Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, negative \$21,288,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Department of Environment and Natural Resources, capital investment expenditures, energy and strategic initiatives, not previously authorized, \$51,227,000. Does committee agree? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yeah, so there's 15 -- about \$15 million that's not going to be spent on so-called Slave Geological Province All-Weather Road Highway Environmental Assessment. So how does that affect the timeline for that project? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, at this point, as Members may be aware, there is a process underway right now for a regional strategic environmental assessment. I think -- I hope I haven't misstated the proper title for it, but it's a process that goes through the board. So there is a delay but for that process -- in order for that other process to take place. There's certainly, I think, some hope that as that process is underway that it will actually -- may ultimately actually benefit that overall region and whatever the future project might look like. So while the specific money that is here for environmental assessment is pushed now into 2023-2024, again, pending what may be happening in this other process here first, that might well actually ultimately help catch up to where a longer term vision of the project might want to be at. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm glad the clock got started there. Yeah, well, I'm glad the Minister volunteered all of that because that was my next question actually, because in the letter that this government sent to -- I'm not sure exactly. I guess it was probably Minister Vandal about the regional study that the Tlicho

government has asked, there was kind of two things that our government mentioned in there. One was that we supported participant funding but they said the other thing was that a regional study shouldn't delay the planning for this road in any way. And that's not what the Minister just said here. So I'm very happy to get that on the record that our government is fine having this road delayed while the regional study is underway and get the results from that first to provide a proper planning context and direction for whether this thing is a good thing or not. So I'm very happy to get that information from the Minister, and I look forward to GNWT actually formalizing that position and putting it forward to the federal minister. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I guess I don't have any other comments to make. I know the departments are working -- all the departments are working together on that right now, and I don't know the current state of the matter that's before the board. But again, as I have said, I think we're all quite hopeful that subject to how that unfolds, which is out of the GNWT's hands, that it will ultimately be for the benefit of that region. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. Well, whether it's to the benefit of the region or not that's I think part of the question, is that the regional study needs to grapple with is, you know, whether you want a road or whether you want to have caribou. And especially at a time where the caribou numbers are so low with the Bathurst herd, and I just don't think that they can handle this kind of disturbance. But that's the kind of issues that the regional study needs to deal with and to figure out if this sort of thing would actually be a net benefit at the end of the day. But, again, I'm very happy to hear that the Minister of Finance say that our government doesn't have a problem delaying this project so that the regional study can be done. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister, I'll allow you to comment if you so wish.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm really wearing more of an ITI hat when I'm speaking about the project, and ENR actually is the lead on it. So this probably isn't the right time or place to get into the weeds of what may or may not be happening on that front with the board. Again, as I said, Mr. Chair, I know our government is

at that table, as is the Tlicho government. I believe other Indigenous governments are there. And we do need to see what that process -- how that process unfolds. We're not the lead. The board is leading that process. So I think all parties see potential benefit from it, and we'll see where that gets us. The money that's here is pushed to 2023-2024. And the Member asked me if that's going to delay the whole project. Mr. Chair, again, it's my hope that it does not and that the regional assessment process does not either. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Well, thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that, but I'm not going to continue the debate here. I got the Minister on record, and now I'm going to hold our government to account for that. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Any further comments in this section? Just to make a correction on the department. It's the Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, energy and strategic initiatives, not previously authorized, \$51,227,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Okay. The ones that are awake are talking. Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, negative \$72,515,000. Does committee agree? Did you hear anything?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 747-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2022-2023? Member for Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 331-19(2):
CONCURRENCE MOTION - TABLED
DOCUMENT 747-19(2): SUPPLEMENTARY
ESTIMATES (INFRASTRUCTURE
EXPENDITURES),
NO. 2, 2022-2023,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 747-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2022-2023, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 747-19(2) be reported and recommended as

ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion. We'll just wait for everyone to get the motion in front of them.

Okay, the motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Tabled Document 747-19(2) will be reported as ready for consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill.

---Carried

Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the chamber. Mahsi.

Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 748-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2022-2023. Does the Minister have any opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am happy to present the Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2022-2023. These supplementary estimates propose a total increase of \$80.684 million of which \$27.7 million will be offset by revenues from the Government of Canada.

Included in this amount is \$22.4 million in changes in accounting treatment that was previously reported as work on behalf of others. These agreements include the following agreements:

- \$8 million to provide support for RCMP facilities, including maintenance, utilities, janitorial services, and minor capital repairs;
- \$4.6 million to support the Labour Market Development Agreement;
- \$2.5 million in support of the Mutual Aid Resources Sharing Agreement;
- \$2.1 million for road maintenance across the Northwest Territories; and
- \$1.6 million for the protection of caribou.

We are also proposing to support federally funded agreements, including:

- \$2.3 million in support of the Building Skills 4 Success Program in the Northwest Territories;
- \$1.4 million to support legal aid services under the agreement respecting access to justice services; and,
- \$1.4 million to support other access to justice services for Indigenous residents, families, and victims of crime.

These supplementary estimates include two significant items to support the government's response to combat natural disasters:

- \$39.2 million for flood relief and recovery in the Town of Hay River and the K'atlodeeche First Nation; and
- \$5 million for additional fire suppression support during the 2022 fire season.

These supplementary estimates also propose the following items which are not offset by federal funding programs:

- \$5.3 million for the government's share of costs related to the RCMP collective agreement; and
- \$2.7 million to support the retention and recruitment of health professionals.

That concludes my opening remarks, Mr. Chair. I'm happy to answer any questions committee may have.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses into the chamber. Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Back again for a second time I have deputy minister of finance Bill MacKay, and the assistant deputy minister Terence Courtoreille.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): I will now open the floor to general comments. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So can someone explain to me, in plain language, what this extra \$22.4 million is all about? It's some sort of change in accounting treatment. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let me turn that to the deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MR. MacKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So under the public service accounting rules, we have to treat certain transfers of funding from the federal government as either flow through arrangements or revenue and if it's -- we determine that this amount of money is actually revenues and needs to be treated as revenue because it goes into the department and then is used in their general appropriation to fund certain projects whereas if it was a flow through arrangement, it would just go from a government to a third party, including a territorial government and just go directly to another party. So they would just be basically flowing the money directly to a third party rather than including as part of the revenue. So we just have to change the accounting treatment of that funding. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. And thanks for that. So do we have to go back in prior years and try to fix this? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: No, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mr. Chair, well good thing I'm not an accountant. So I guess the bottom line here is that we have to -- this money is now showing up on our books as money that we're spending, and we've got \$22.4 million less to work with? I am confused at the best of times. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So no, Mr. Chair, fortunately it doesn't work out that way. It really is just a way in which the funds are classified and where it's being reported upon. It's not a change to the funding arrangements or funding agreements that are in place but just a change in that it's being reported now as an appropriation whereas before, it was not. But it doesn't change money available to the government. It's just money that was

previously being classified as money that was brought in to do work for others, federal government being probably the top of that list, as opposed to now wanting to show up elsewhere. It is -- maybe I should just start with this -- or just end with this, Mr. Chair. It's money that's fully offset from third parties. So whether it's money that we say is on behalf of others or that we now show as a different -- under a different classification to work on behalf of, that's really all that's happening here. So no actual changes to the financial standing of the government.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Did you get all of that, Mr. O'Reilly?

MR. O'REILLY: Mr. Chair, actually believe it or not, I now understand it. There's an offsetting amount that's coming in as revenue from the federal government, and we just have to show the money going out. And that's what this is about. So thank you for that explanation late on a Tuesday night.

So there's some money in here for flood relief and I, of course, support that, but is this the end of it or can we expect to see more funding in future supplementary appropriations just for flood relief? And my next one will be about whether there's anything in here for planning to -- in terms of longer term mitigation. But let's just deal with is there more money coming in a future sup for relief? Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the money that is being sought for appropriation here is for up to 2022-2023 -- or, well, for this year in terms of what we are anticipating. Certainly, obviously can't see into the future of what might happen in the spring and would certainly note that this doesn't account for whatever amounts we may then ultimately get by the federal government under the disaster assistance policy. We certainly are hopeful of an advance and then ultimately hopeful to see a full 90 percent coverage. But neither -- the first of those might arrive this fiscal but it may well be that it's not until next, and the full amount is unlikely to arrive this or next fiscal. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. Yeah, I think there's going to be a cash flow problem here. But can someone tell me where we stand at with the supplementary reserve for the operations side for 2022-2023? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I certainly can. So we start off the year -- just to remind the House, we start off the year with the \$35 million supplementary reserve, and we right now are in a deficit of just over \$42 million. The main reason for that is as a result of the costs of the flood for 2022, and that is -- yes, that is a significant reason for that overage. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mr. Chair, so how do we make up that \$42 million deficit? Is it short-term borrowing that we have to incur to cover that and -- yeah, I'll start there. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So there will be -- well, depending on what the surplus -- our operating surplus position is, we were, you may recall, forecasting at one point a fairly significant operating surplus. So that is the first piece that it gets taken from, is what would have been an operating surplus will now likely not be and anything beyond that would increase our debt. We'd be taking on debt in order to ensure that we can meet those cash obligations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you for that. So what, if any, lessons have we learned, then, in terms of the size of the supplementary reserve? And I recognize that we wouldn't expect a Hay River flood every year but clearly with the climate crisis on us and so on, we need to find a way to set aside some more money to deal with this kind of stuff that's more likely to happen. So how are we going to try to manage this into the future? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I mean, I -- and I appreciate the comment again. We certainly don't want to see a flood impact that's the size of \$100 million as we did this year. Certainly I mentioned the year before, while devastating in the Deh Cho region and the Nahendeh region, the costs of that flood in 2021 were nowhere near what this one was. So there's by no means any certainty that we're going to be year over year seeing \$100 million for what appear to be climate change impacts. That said, I take the point it is -- that, you know, there may need to be some looking at where this -- what kind of

reserve is required. This particular year, this -- it was part of the fiscal strategy early days of how we might mitigate and how we might plan to have reserves and what that would like like as the overall fiscal strategy for four years. Things, obviously, change a lot over the course of four years notwithstanding a pandemic. So, again, point well taken and probably well made given that we are kind of going into our last main estimates but then planning does begin almost immediately thereafter for what the government would look like in the future. So, you know, point taken and thoughts on that can begin to crystallize. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. It's one last one maybe, and the Minister already touched on this, but for I guess 2023-2024 -- oh, well it looks like for 2022-2023 we've gone now from an operating surplus to probably an operating deficit. How is that going to be in compliance with the fiscal responsibility policy in light of the capital estimates that are also before the House? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So there is within the fiscal responsibility policy, a two year period so it's not necessary -- it doesn't line up -- there is kind of a grace period where if there is an event such as, you know, what we all hope to be a once in a lifetime flood that in those circumstances, we would see that you do get a bit of room. We get these two years where the deficit that we're running now we can catch up on. And so with that also said, the operating deficits, the surpluses aren't necessarily -- we need to actually see where the actuals land to see just what level of compliance we have with the fiscal responsibility policy, and that is -- that is information that we'll be in a position to provide within the next couple of months. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi for that. Any further comments for the general comments section? Seeing no further general comments, we will proceed to a review of the supplementary estimates by department and activity. Committee, please turn to page 3 of the tabled document, Education, Culture and Employment.

Education, Culture and Employment, junior kindergarten to grade 12 school services, not previously authorized, \$635,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, committee. Education, Culture and Employment, labour development and advanced education, not previously authorized \$6,939,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, committee. Education, Culture and Employment, total department, operations expenditures, not previously authorized \$7,574,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Committee, please turn to pages 4 and 5 of the tabled document. Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Environment and Natural Resources, environmental stewardship and climate change, not previously authorized, \$150,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Environment and Natural Resources, forest management, not previously authorized \$7,518,000. Does committee agree? Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see there's \$5 million extra here for forest fire suppression. Can I just get confirmation what that brings the total forest fire cost to and whether this is the end of it. I know we were fighting fires very late this year. The sup sometimes takes some time so do we believe this is the end of extra money needed for forest fires this season? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the total amount for this season is coming in at just over \$24.7 million. So a little bit more than what is reflected here. That's the total budget including the base funding amounts that were for the department. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: That's all.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Environment and Natural Resources, forest management not previously authorized \$7,518,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Environment and Natural Resources, water management and monitoring not previously authorized, \$325,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Environment and Natural Resources, wildlife and fish, not previously authorized, \$1,622,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, committee. Environment and Natural Resources, total department, operations expenditures, not previously authorized \$10,215,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Committee, please turn to page 6 of the tabled document, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs.

Executive and Indigenous Affairs, directorate, not previously authorized, \$381,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, committee. Executive and Indigenous Affairs, total department, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, \$381,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Committee, please turn to page 7 of the tabled document, Department of Health and Social Services, health and social services administrative and support services, not previously authorized, \$430,000. Does committee agree? Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I just have a couple of questions. I'm wondering how quickly the labour market supplement will be provided to existing employees. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm just trying to confirm with the deputy exactly what day the first payment will be made. I believe it is this month. I just don't know exactly on what day. The deputy minister might know.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MR. MacKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We pay it on the regular pay cycle. So the next pay date in November is when we're expecting it to go out. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to whether or not there are any anticipated expansions of the Labour Market Supplement Program? I know that many of us have heard from different constituents who feel that they have been -- or who have been cut out of the program and who have indicated that they may go to their deputy heads in regards to this. And I'm wondering if the Minister has any indication as to whether or not they've heard from different deputy heads or if there is a plan to expand the eligibility for this program within this fiscal year? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I do sincerely hope that public servants don't feel left out. I know there are some and many that do. Mr. Chair, the labour market supplement, it is not a bonus. It was not COVID pay. It was not reflective of folks who I know were working on the front lines during COVID and were often working through very difficult circumstances through COVID. The labour market supplement flows from the labour market supplement policy that was developed to give some parameters in what is a very difficult labour market in all industries, in all professions across all of Canada, and to make sure that we had every possible available tool at our disposal to be able to recruit staff and retain staff in certain positions here in the Northwest Territories. So the policy is really focused on positions that are difficult to staff. And to get into the state of having a labour market supplement applicable meant that the department, in this case it was Health and Social Services that came forward, which, you know, really with the headlines that are coming from across Canada, that probably shouldn't be particularly striking that there are some positions within Health and Social Services that are in particular demand and very difficult post-COVID to be staffing. So they came forward first with their evidence and information about which positions would qualify under the policy for a labour market supplement. There was then the discussions that take place with the union to ensure that, you know, again this is a modification over the

agreements that would otherwise normally be in place under a collective agreement, and the discussions that were had in the fall were really because both sides were coming to the table recognizing the urgency of the area.

The benefit to staff, Mr. Chair, is really that when there's more staff there on the floor and available, then that increases the number of people that hopefully decreases people being asked to do overtime, decreases hopefully the number of people that are running double shifts. And that should be hopefully a larger scale benefit. But, Mr. Chair, it's -- it is dependent, if there's going to be another labour market supplement, on another department coming forward and saying that they have that same level and need and meets the policy. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm glad the Minister brought up additional staff. And it's my understanding that this line item also speaks to the hiring of additional staff. And I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to that item and how many people that might be, and we'll go from there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there is, indeed, some amount here for other recruitment and retention strategies. And that was, if you will recall, earlier before the labour impact supplement came out, a variety of strategies put forward by the Department of Health and Social Services and working with Department of Finance and human resources specialists about other options. So, for instance -- and I think this is what the question is. There's four employee on-boarding specialists positions. That is really meant to be an opportunity to help new staff who come in understand relocation, understand getting settled. They are based two in Yellowknife, one in Hay River, one in Behchoko. It was in response to concerns raised within the Department of Health and Social Services that new and incoming staff, particularly those moving from somewhere else to a new community, with all of the demands of the position that they're in and all of the frontline needs that they have, were often not being really well brought into the service, really well brought into their community, and that this was becoming a significant issue on retention. And so it was considered to be an area that could directly benefit keeping folks available and really recruiting people in who could feel welcome

and immediately integrate well into the service. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Minister also brought up the huge quantity of overtime that nurses are doing and healthcare professionals are doing and how reducing that really is going to be a mechanism to retain staff so they do have that work-life balance and are able to, you know, really work in safe working environments. And so I'm wondering if a future supplementary appropriation will include bursary programs essentially for education in return for service within the public service so that we can really create our own nursing pool and then create our own pool of people that are doing return for -- or return of service for education. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I was listening earlier during question period when those questions were put to the Minister of Health and Social Services. I am in no better position to answer them than what she was at that time. So I think I'll just defer to another round of questioning at another time perhaps. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Tomorrow is a new day. Mr. Chair, my next question is one of the things that was pointed out after the labour market supplement was announced within NTHSSA is that the Hay River health authority falls out of that. So should the Hay River health authority move forward? Are we to expect an additional supplementary appropriation, or how will that work? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, yes, they are, as I understand, still in bargaining. So, again, I do want to be cautious in speaking about anything that's happening in bargaining. I would not want ever to be a sense that we are, you know, trying to assume the outcomes of a process that has a proper process to be followed. Now, I do think it's probably fairly expected, given some of the public statements that were made by the parties, that there is likely to be some amount. Now, as to whether or not it has to come back through an appropriation or not will depend on what the

final amounts are. If there is a need to appropriate further dollars for Hay River Health and Social Services Authority through the Department of Health and Social Services, yes, it comes back as a sup. If the amounts -- given that it's a smaller authority, are of a nature that they can be internalized within the department, then it wouldn't come back as a sup. But that's -- unfortunately, at this point, I wouldn't -- I can't -- I can't finally predict that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have no more questions at this time.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Health and Social Services, administrative and support services, not previously authorized, \$430,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Health and Social Services, health and social programs, not previously authorized, \$2,683,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, committee. Health and Social Services, total department, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, \$3,113,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Committee, please turn to page 8 of the tabled document, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Industry, Tourism and Investment, corporate management, not previously authorized, negative \$16,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Industry, Tourism and Investment, economic diversification and business support, not previously authorized, \$1,044,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Industry, Tourism and Investment, tourism and parks, not previously authorized, negative \$17,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, committee. Industry, Tourism and Investment, total department, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, \$1,011,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Committee, please turn to page 9 of the tabled document, Department of Infrastructure, asset management, not previously authorized, \$58,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Infrastructure, energy and strategic initiatives, not previously authorized, \$300,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Infrastructure, programs and services, not previously authorized, \$153,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Infrastructure, regional operations, not previously authorized, \$10,272,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, committee. Infrastructure, total department, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, \$10,783,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Committee, please turn to page 10 of the tabled document. Department of Justice.

Justice, community justice, not previously authorized, \$1,201,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Justice, court services, not previously authorized, \$201,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Justice, legal aid services, not previously authorized, \$1,369,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Justice, policing services, not previously authorized, \$5,314,000. Does committee agree? Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see \$5 million here for the RCMP collective agreement. My understanding is that there's a bit of a dispute about how the collective agreement is going to apply to the back pay or retroactively. Can I just clarify whether this is the total amount we owe for the collective agreement or whether this \$5 million is just one - this fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is for 2022-2023 or this current fiscal year only. And I don't have detail as to what may or may not be happening with respect to retroactive pay that flows from the collective agreement, the newly agreed-to collective agreement. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, okay. I think there was two or -- I can't remember, two or three years of retroactive pay. I see \$5 million one year. So is it safe to assume that there's 10 or \$15 million more coming to the RCMP? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, this first collective agreement spans from April 1st, 2017, through to March 31st, of 2023. I don't know offhand what those costs for the retroactive pay will look like, nor do I necessarily know what cost share ratio there might be associated. Obviously, we'll have to come back before the House when or if that is resolved and likely through the form of a supplementary appropriation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Okay, and just confirming that this brings our policing services contract with the RCMP up to \$55 million? Is it then anticipated for the remainder of this collective agreement that would be the total amount of the contract, or is there some other thing going on where we may be more than \$5 million built into next fiscal? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, the current

agreement is in effect, as I said -- or this portion here, now we do have until 2023. There's an agreement that I believe has been reached up to March 31st of 2032, and it will then be built in for the Department of Justice in their main estimates so that in future years it will be reflected through the usual appropriations process. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: No further questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Justice, policing services, not previously authorized, \$5,314,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Justice, services to the public, not previously authorized, \$239,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, committee. Justice, total department, operations expenditures, not previously authorized \$8,324,000. Does committee agree?

Committee, please turn to page 11 of the tabled document, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Municipal and Community Affairs, community operations, not previously authorized, \$40,000. Does committee agree? Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. So there's \$39 million here for the flooding, bringing the total appropriation to \$117 million, I'm just going to round here. Can I just clarify whether this includes -- I believe there was a \$60 million special warrant. Whether -- how that fits into this figure. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mr. Johnson, we're on the -- page 11. We're on the community operations, the \$40,000. So your question is on the next section, right, so all right. Not previously authorized, \$40,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Okay. Municipal and Community Affairs, public safety, not previously authorized, \$39,243,000. Does committee agree? Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe somewhere that there was a \$60 million special warrant for the flooding. Can I just clarify whether that figure is included in this \$117 million. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. That is correct. The \$60 million special warrant, this appropriation, total flood costs are \$109 million of the \$117 million that's reflected at that line item. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My understanding is that the total flood costs are quite a bit higher than that. So can I just clarify whether we are expecting further supplementary appropriations to come forward for flood costs? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Chair, let me turn that to Mr. Courtoreille who I expect will have the most up to date numbers.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. \$109 million is the latest number that we have. I understand the department is still working very closely with the community on cost claims, and if there are additional claims that exceed the \$109 million, that potentially could be considered in sup 3 later this year for 2022-2023. And just to clarify, sir, this is only the 2022-2023 number. There is another amount expected in 2023-2024 as well. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And can someone just tell me how the KFN reserve funding flows into this. I believe they are going through a different process and are expecting hopefully 100 percent money back through the federal government through Indigenous services. Can I just clarify whether this money also includes the KFN money. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, so it does still include that because the GNWT fronts the costs. But the Member is correct that because it has a different funding source from the federal government, we are expecting that those costs

will be 100 percent funded as compared to the 90 percent under the disaster -- the disaster assistance policy. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: No further questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Municipal and Community Affairs, public safety, not previously authorized, \$39,243,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, committee. Municipal and Community Affairs, total department, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, \$39,283,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 748-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2022-2023?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 332-19(2):
CONCURRENCE MOTION – TABLED
DOCUMENT 748-19(2), SUPPLEMENTARY
ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS
EXPENDITURES), NO. 2, 2022-2023,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 748-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2022-2023, be now concluded; and, that Tabled Document 748-19(2) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, committee. We have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 748-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2022-2023. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber, please. Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I move that the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): 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? Motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Mahsi.

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. BONNETROUGE: Madam Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 36-19(2), Tabled Document 747-19(2), Tabled Document 748-19(2), and would like to report progress with 11 motions adopted. And that Committee Report 36-19(2) is concluded. That consideration of Tabled Documents 747-19(2) and 748-19(2) are concluded and that the House concur in those estimates and that an appropriation bill be based thereon and be introduced without delay. And Madam Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Mahsi.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Do I have a seconder? Member for Range Lake. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried.

Third reading of bills. Member for Hay River South.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 58:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
ACT, NO. 2,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River

North, that Bill 58, an Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2, be read for a third time. And Madam Speaker, I am requesting a recorded vote. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question has been called. The Member for Hay River South has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): The Member for Hay River South, the Member for Thebacha, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Monfwi, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Yellowknife South, the Member for Sahtu, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Hay River North, the Member for Deh Cho.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise. All the those abstaining, please rise.

The results of the recorded vote is 15 in favour, zero opposed, and zero abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 58 has had third reading.

---Carried

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Third reading of bills. Member for Hay River South.

BILL 59:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE ELECTIONS AND
PLEBISCITES ACT,
CARRIED

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that Bill 59, An Act to Amend the Elections and Plebiscites Act, be read for a third time. And Madam Speaker, I am requesting a recorded vote. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to, again, rise in my opposition to clause 12 of this bill which will prohibit

cannabis sales on polling day. I want to clarify how committee got here.

They started with a recommendation that said, from the Chief Electoral Officer, as recommended in 2015, this subsection in the Election and Plebiscites Act unfairly penalizes business owners. There is no data available to support a view that the sale of liquor, retail or in establishment, has any bearing in polling day turnout. Most Canadian jurisdictions have eliminated this requirement. And then, somehow, we ended up instead of listening to our Chief Electoral Officer and the Chamber of Commerce and numerous businesses' repeated requests to get rid of liquor on polling day, we are adding cannabis.

I also want to clarify the committee seems to think and were originally bringing forward that this will bring some consistency. However, this will only prohibit cannabis if passed on territorial election day. You can still sell cannabis on municipal election days, federal election days, and municipal election days.

Additionally, the Minister of Finance has recently in their liquor legislation review stated that they will remove the requirement on the prohibition of selling alcohol on polling day. This is actually found in the liquor regulations. It does not require legislative amendment. So the Minister can and should make that change any day. But here we are, once again, making it illegal to sell cannabis every day -- every four years once a day for really no reason at all.

When the Cannabis Act was passed, it did not include this section. There's no intention as far as I can tell by the Liquor Act or the Cannabis Act to prohibit the selling. It is really just this one motion being brought forward today.

Unfortunately, this morning when I wanted to delete this, I forgot to get a seconder. I have no idea whether I have any support for this or if I am alone but should any Member wish to second a motion deleting clause 12, that would be greatly appreciated or else perhaps this will just go up in smoke. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? Oh, sorry. Is it a recorded -- all right. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): The Member for Hay River South, the Member for Thebacha, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Monfwi, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Yellowknife South, the Member for Sahtu, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Hay River North, the Member for Deh Cho.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): The Member for Yellowknife North.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: All those abstaining, please rise. The results of the recorded vote is 15 in favour, one opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 59 has had third reading.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Orders of the day. Madam Clerk.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Wickens): Orders of the day for Wednesday, November 2nd, 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
 - Oral Question 1246-19(2), Infertility Treatment
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 67-19(2), Appointment of Sergeant-at-Arms of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly

17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

18. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 65, Builder's Lien Act
- Bill 66, An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act
- Bill 67, An Act to Amend the Fire Prevention Act
- Bill 68, An Act to Amend the Child Day Care Act

19. Second Reading of Bills

- Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act
- Bill 62, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
- Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act
- Bill 64, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 3

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
- Committee Report 37-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2022 Audit of Addictions Prevention and Recovery Services
- Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Response to the NWT Chief Coroner's Report on Suicide Report of Committee of the Whole

- Tabled Document 681-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 26-19(2): Report on the Child and Family Services Act – Lifting Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together
- Tabled Document 694-19(2): Northwest Territories Coroner Service 2021-2022 Early Release of Data
- 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

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, November 2nd, 2022 at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:42 p.m.