

**THE HONOURABLE DIANE ARCHIE
MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE**

Access to Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programs

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question asked by the Member for Frame Lake on December 2, 2021, regarding Access to Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programs.

A request was made to provide details of the Department of Infrastructure's work with the Arctic Energy Alliance, including information on how the Department ensures maximum access for Northwest Territories residents, additional funding allocated to enhance accessibility of these programs, and which programs ran out of money before the end of a fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, the Arctic Energy Alliance's Regional Coordinators in its five Regional Offices outside of Yellowknife engage with every community in every region of the Northwest Territories. Even during the past 18 months, when the ability to travel was affected by COVID-19, Regional Coordinators have continued to reach out to all communities to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy, and to encourage participation in their programs and services.

Additionally, the Arctic Energy Alliance has developed two programs that provide specialized support for low-income residents: the Community Woodstove Program and the Low-Income Home Winterization Program. Both are based on partnership models, and the community partners are responsible for identifying eligible residents who would benefit most from these programs. The Arctic Energy Alliance has also recently increased rebates amounts for various programs to better meet the needs of clients. More details on these programs are available in the Alliance's annual reports.



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Mr. Speaker, regarding the questions about additional funding allocated to enhance accessibility of these programs for residents, the Government of the Northwest Territories and Arctic Energy Alliance conduct a review of the Alliance's budget every fiscal year in the third quarter and reallocate budgets from undersubscribed programs to programs with more uptake than expected.

This process allows the flexibility needed to meet unanticipated demand without the government having to appropriate new funds each year and avoids having to repay contribution funding for undersubscribed programs. The downside is that clients end up on waitlists until this process is completed, which historically happens at different times of the year due to variable public uptake.

Mr. Speaker, the core ongoing budget that the Government of the Northwest Territories provided to the Arctic Energy Alliance is \$2.74 million dollars. In 2021 - 2022, the Government of the Northwest Territories provided an additional \$2.744 million dollars in supplemental funding under the federal Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund starting April 1, 2021, as well as an additional \$1.09 million dollars in Low Carbon Economy funding through a supplementary appropriation last summer carrying forward unspent federal funding from the previous fiscal year.

Most recently, \$100,000 dollars in federal Low Carbon Economy funding was reallocated from the Community Energy Plan Implementation budget to the Energy Efficiency Incentive Program to better manage the program to fiscal year end. The total budget for the Arctic Energy Alliance this year is \$6.6 million dollars, which is the largest budget to date.

Mr. Speaker, there have been no Arctic Energy Alliance programs that have run out of money before the end of the fiscal year in the last five years.

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This year, only two programs are experiencing increased uptake: the Alternative Energy Technology Program and the Energy Efficiency Incentive Program. The Arctic Energy Alliance is actively managing these through waitlists and the internal relocations of funding. This year, the last Energy Efficiency Incentive Program rebate issued before a waitlist was established, was for an application dated August 31, 2021.

The Alternative Energy Technology Program has a pre-approval requirement; that is, a project is given pre-approval and is issued a purchase order to ensure budget is available for the rebate when the project is completed. The Arctic Energy Alliance continuously assesses projects that have started to determine if they will be completed in the current fiscal year. If that is unlikely to happen, available funding may be moved to other projects.

With the substantial number of pre-approved projects in the current fiscal year, the Arctic Energy Alliance felt it was prudent to notify applicants who applied after mid-June 2021 that their projects were not guaranteed funding and they would be placed on the waitlist. Some projects that were waitlisted in June have since been issued rebates with funds reallocated from projects that were not able to be completed. It is too soon to tell if we will be able to cover Alternative Energy Technology Program demand for this year through reallocations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.