

Return to Written Question

**THE HONOURABLE BOB MCLEOD
MINISTER OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

Filling Vacancies on Co-Management Boards

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question asked by Mr. Kevin O'Reilly on November 3, 2016 regarding filling vacancies on co-management boards.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has implemented several initiatives to monitor upcoming vacancies and potential quorum issues for each of the 14 co-management boards in the Northwest Territories.

The Department of Executive continues to send board vacancy reports to departments on a semi-annual basis. The report informs departments of all board vacancies and identifies potential quorum issues.

In order to make it consistent with the principles of open government, on November 30, 2016, the Department of Executive launched a revamped Public Board Appointment website. Using newer technology, the website now shows current and upcoming vacancies; the most recent appointments made, and improved reporting capabilities.

The revised website is also accessible by any smartphone and the general public can continue to submit an expression of interest for a board position at any time using

the Public Board Appointment website. All expressions of interest remain on file for two years and can be drawn upon when a vacancy occurs.

In addition, the Departments of Lands and Environment and Natural Resources actively monitor the Public Board Appointment website and will initiate the appointment or nomination process upwards of nine to twelve months prior to the board member's term expiring, or as soon as possible when an unexpected vacancy occurs.

Recently the Departments of Lands and Environment and Natural Resources combined efforts to advertise in News North and L'Acquilon seeking expressions of interest from the general public to serve on various boards in the Mackenzie Valley and Inuvialuit regions. Advertisements ran twice in each newspaper in late October and early November.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to an effective regulatory system in the Northwest Territories. The GNWT is only one party in the overall system of board appointments in the Mackenzie Valley and Inuvialuit Settlement Region. While the GNWT endeavors to make timely appointments or nominations, the completion of board appointments depend on several factors: timely nominations from claimant group organizations; the process required to undertake federal security checks; and the time needed by the federal Minister or Governor in Council to finalize appointments.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of improving the appointment process is one that I have raised on several occasions with both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs within the context of transitioning authorities under the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*, or MVRMA, to the Northwest Territories. Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories agreed to review the provisions related to the MVRMA in the Devolution Agreement. The agreement specified that this review would commence following the fifth anniversary of the transfer. The message that I have been delivering to Canada is that our government supports getting on with this work much sooner.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.