

Return to Written Question

THE HONOURABLE ROBERT R. MCLEOD
PREMIER

Government of the Northwest Territories Participation in the Association for Mineral Exploration Roundup, January 2019

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question asked by Mr. O'Reilly on February 5, 2019, related to the Government of the Northwest Territories' (GNWT) participation in the Association for Mineral Exploration Roundup in January 2019.

I would like to advise you that 6 Ministers and 30 staff, including Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), traveled to Vancouver to attend the Roundup on January 28 – 31, 2019. Additionally, the GNWT supported the participation of 15 individual representatives from Indigenous governments to attend the Roundup, which reflects the GNWT's continued effort to ensure that Indigenous governments are positioned to effectively participate in all stages of mineral development, including facilitating relationship building between Indigenous governments and mining industry players.

The GNWT participated in various mining and exploration events, and engaged with stakeholders regarding the Government's commitment to responsible mineral development within the Northwest Territories (NWT), and promoting our leading approach to Indigenous partnership and reconciliation. In addition, the Social-Economic Agreement between the GNWT and Fortune Minerals was signed. This formal agreement marks an important milestone for the NICO mine project, which will provide local employment and contribute to increased economic activity in the NWT.

The total cost of air travel for the 36 GNWT participants was \$41,823. All travel was economy class except for six one way business class flights where prices were lower than available economy seats.

Participants' accommodations costs varied by lengths of stay, but have been calculated at a total of \$37,270. Other expenses for the 36 GNWT participants, such as meals, incidentals and transportation totaled \$25,411. No allowances were paid.

The GNWT paid \$2,363 in Roundup registration fees, and exhibition costs charged to the GNWT totaled \$54,031. No consultant fees were paid.

In addition, the GNWT paid \$2,097 for registration costs for professional development courses offered as a component of the conference. Northwest Territories Geological Survey (NTGS) geologists are both research scientists and members of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists (NAPEG), the latter being required by NWT legislation. For both of these roles, ongoing professional development is a requirement.

The GNWT supported the participation of 15 individuals representing NWT Indigenous governments at this year's Roundup. The associated costs for the participation of these individuals totaled \$65,000.

The hospitality events hosted by the GNWT were a Premier's Indigenous Partners Luncheon attended by 72 people, an NWT Open House attended by 320 people, an Indigenous Development Corporation Panel Session attended by 70 people and a meeting with the Governments of Yukon and British Columbia. The cost associated with hosting these three events was a total of \$53,294.

Each of these events provided NWT Cabinet members, Members of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment, and Indigenous leaders with opportunities to address and network with industry representatives and those interested in the mineral exploration industry.

Other costs related to the GNWT's participation in the Association for Mineral Exploration Roundup included the hiring of a videographer and photographer for the event which totaled \$5,100.

The GNWT's direct costs and contributions associated with the participation at the Roundup in 2016 totaled approximately \$137,000, approximately \$196,359 in 2017, approximately \$277,530 in 2018, and \$286,389 in 2019. The approximate \$8,000 increase in annual costs from prior years to attend Roundups can mainly be attributed to the NTGS professional development costs, as well as the additional cost of hiring a videographer and photographer for the event.

The total costs included provide detail related to Roundup 2019 calculated as of March 26, 2019. Should any additional costs be identified, I expect they will be minor.

The investment in GNWT participation at Roundup is more critical than it has ever been. At a time when commodity markets are showing strong signs of recovery and the level of interest in the NWT mining sector potential is notably growing, it is paramount that the NWT profile and presence at such resource conferences not only remain high, but expands. Globally, encouraging signs and forecasts point to an upward trend in exploration activity and investment.

The NWT competes in this global environment and must be present and increasingly active at such important resource conferences as Roundup in order to take advantage of a positive outlook for the mining sector and attract more investment to NWT projects. The territory's existing mines are moving towards or have passed maturity, so strong action must be taken to find and develop new mineral deposits and advance those projects already established.

Roundup was an opportunity for Indigenous delegates to learn more about the opportunities within the mining sector, how the mining sector operates, promote the resource and business partnership potential of their respective regions and, most importantly, establish relationships and connections that may lead to future development opportunities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker