

NWT Climate Change Council

Mr. Speaker, strengthening the government's leadership and authority on climate change, ensuring climate change impacts are specifically considered when making government decisions, and increasing the use of alternative and renewable energy are mandate priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly.

Climate change continues to be a critical issue facing us today and is affecting the Northwest Territories in many ways. That is why the Government of the Northwest Territories is taking real action to address climate change through implementing the NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework 2019-2023 Action Plan.

One of the commitments the Government of the Northwest Territories made to strengthen our leadership and authority on climate change is to establish the NWT Climate Change Council. I am pleased to say we have made progress on that commitment with the finalizing of the Council's Terms of Reference.

Mr. Speaker, the Climate Change Council will be a forum for information sharing, collaboration and engagement between representatives of Indigenous governments and organizations, community governments, and the Government of the Northwest Territories. It will provide guidance and advice to inform Government of the Northwest Territories climate change and environment programs. The Council and the Government of the Northwest Territories will also be advised by industry, non-government organizations, co-management bodies and academia.

Mr. Speaker, not only has the Government of the Northwest Territories worked to establish the Climate Change Council, we also released our first progress reports on our territory-wide approach to climate change in January.

Environment and Natural Resources, the lead department for climate change, along with the departments of Infrastructure and Finance, jointly released four reports:

- ENR's NWT Climate Change Action Plan Annual Report
- Infrastructure's NWT Energy Initiatives Report
- Finance's NWT Carbon Tax Report; and
- ENR's Plain Language Overview Report summarizing our government and partners' activities to address climate change.

The reports will collectively help keep our residents informed on the progress we are making on this important issue.

We are making progress. Almost all action items under the Climate Change Action Plan are underway and we are well-positioned to continue to transition to a lower-carbon economy, improve knowledge of climate change impacts, and build resilience and adapt to climate change.

Mr. Speaker, another mandate commitment our government has made significant progress on is ensuring climate change impacts are specifically considered when making government decisions.

Then Executive Council and Financial Management Board decision-making instruments have been updated to ensure climate change factors are considered and documented, as applicable, in decisions moving forward. This is a substantial milestone, as the Northwest Territories is one of only a few jurisdictions in Canada to include climate change considerations in its government decision-making processes.

This means that going forward Cabinet and Financial Management Board decision papers, submissions and legislative proposals will include climate change factors for consideration. Integrating climate change considerations will improve accountability in Government of the Northwest Territories decision-making processes.

Mr. Speaker, Northwest Territories residents are profoundly impacted by climate change and the Government of the Northwest Territories must show leadership in addressing its impacts and opportunities. By working together, both within our departments and with our partners, we can transition to a lower carbon economy; strengthen our understanding of the effects of climate change; and build resilience and adapt to a changing climate now and for future generations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.