

## **Vision and Purpose of the Proposed Mineral Resources Act**

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories recognizes the need to advance the territorial vision of land and resource management in accordance with the Land Use and Sustainability Framework and we have made a mandate commitment to evolve our legislative, regulatory and policy systems by developing and proposing a variety of Acts including a Mineral Resources Act.

The Northwest Territories has mineral potential that could position it as a primary economic driver for our country. The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to responsibly managing NWT resources, and passing made-in-the-North legislation.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming days we will introduce the Northwest Territories' first Mineral Resources Act. This proposed Act is the culmination of years of research, public engagement, collaboration with Indigenous governments and organizations, and consistent engagement with industry and other interested stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, first-and-foremost, this legislation is a foundation upon which our management of the minerals industry can be built. Its defining goal is to give our government the ability to respond to the wants and needs of our people; bring clarity and certainty where it is lacking; and modernize how we govern mineral resources. These authorities will give us the ability to set regulations to match those ambitions and remove existing legislation barriers.

The proposed Act would allow the NWT to regulate minerals effectively, efficiently, and transparently. It could provide benefits for people and communities of the NWT and Indigenous governments and support our economic interests by ensuring wealth generated by mineral resources are used to benefit our territory for generations to come. It will also encourage positive relationships between all parties; improve geological knowledge of our territory; complement our existing systems of land and natural resource management; and recognize sustainable land use. It is designed to achieve these ends while ensuring respect for Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.

Mr. Speaker, it will define a vision for managing exploration and mining in a way that makes sure NWT residents benefit; fosters positive relationships; and advances the public interest while maintaining a balanced approach for all. I would like to share some brief examples of why I see it this way.

Contained within the proposed Act, for the first time in Canada, provisions that would ensure benefits for Indigenous governments and organizations for major mining projects. This proposed Act also addresses the benefit-generating tools for NWT residents. It will clarify an approach that has existed in practice through our Socio-Economic Agreements, and provide the flexibility to use other tools we see appropriate to generate benefits for the territory.

Mr. Speaker, Indigenous governments, communities, public government, and those looking to do business here will all find measures in this proposed Act that will benefit them as they work to build mutually beneficial relationships in the mining industry.

Through the proposed Act we hope to encourage early engagement, better communication, and predictable dispute resolution. We are also proposing processes to reduce conflict by addressing gaps around sensitive lands and local awareness amongst those exploring for minerals.

The proposed Act will enable our exploration regime to move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with online map staking. This will actually help facilitate improved communication and transparency once implemented. Finally, we recognize that geological information is key and much of it collected through mineral exploration to mining activities. We will be proposing the ability to collect more geological information through all stages of the mineral development cycle. Such measures would add to our understanding of the territory's complex geology, and could encourage economic development in the future, while also respecting the need for reasonable confidentiality to protect commercial interests.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure you the GNWT recognizes how important it is for NWT residents to have accessible information about our legislation. That's why the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment plans to release public awareness materials, and I hope to work with Regular Members, to support a full understanding of what we hope and intend for this proposed Act to achieve.

We are encouraging NWT residents to visit our website; get acquainted with the details of our proposals; and take part as this proposed Act moves through the legislative process.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of how far we've come, but understand there's more work to come. The proposed Mineral Resources Act addresses the need for modern, clear and competitive legislation and a regulatory framework that responds to the needs of the NWT and its investment partners.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.