

**THE HONOURABLE ROBERT C. MCLEOD
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND
NATURAL RESOURCES**

NO.: 136-18(3)

DATE: February 8, 2019

Thaidene Nënë

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has a mandate commitment to use the Land Use and Sustainability Framework to establish the Thaidene Nënë protected area in partnership with Indigenous governments and the Government of Canada.

I can inform Members of the Legislative Assembly that we have made significant progress toward the establishment of the protected area with the negotiation of a draft Establishment Agreement between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation.

The Chief and Council for Łutsel K'e have authorized a ratification vote for the general membership to take place on February 18, 2019. We are hopeful for a positive outcome of this vote, which will continue to move us towards our goal of having a signed Establishment Agreement.

A completed Establishment Agreement between the Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation and the Government of the Northwest Territories is one of a number of agreements required to establish Thaidene Nënë. This includes a Land Transfer Agreement with Parks Canada for the transfer of the approximately 14,000 square kilometres of land required to establish the National Park Reserve.

This session, our government intends to introduce a Protected Areas Act, which will be used to establish Thaidene Nënë. This legislation will allow us to develop regulations for this protected area, based on a final Establishment Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, I can also advise the Legislative Assembly that we have taken significant strides toward establishing a Regional Management Body for Thaidene Nënë that will include all Akaitcho communities, the Northwest Territory Métis Nation, Parks Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

More work still needs to be done to formalize this arrangement and conclude agreements with other Indigenous governments and organizations, but the negotiation of a draft Establishment Agreement with the Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation is a significant milestone in the long journey toward establishing Thaidene Nënë.

I would like to recognize the efforts of everyone involved in helping us advance the finalization of this important initiative and I look forward to keeping Members apprised of the progress.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.