

**Self-government Agreement-in-Principle for the  
Sahtu Dene and Metis of Norman Wells**

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Mr. Speaker, on January 16, 2019, I had the honour of signing the Self-government Agreement-in-Principle for the Sahtu Dene and Métis of Norman Wells, alongside our negotiating partners, the Government of Canada and the Norman Wells Land Corporation.

Reaching this Self-government Agreement-in-Principle represents a significant step in the journey towards fulfilling the obligation to negotiate self-government in the 1993 Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement. More importantly, this Agreement-in-Principle represents a key milestone in the journey towards self-government and self-determination for the Sahtu Dene and Metis of Norman Wells.

Mr. Speaker, the work of negotiating and concluding land, resources and self-government agreements can be challenging, but it is essential if we are to build the Northwest Territories and Canada that we all want to be a part of. A territory and a country where our long history of working and living together is protected, and where the rights of Indigenous peoples are protected for future generations.

While there are similarities between self-government agreements in the Northwest Territories, there are also many unique aspects that take into account the different needs and self-government priorities of the communities. Simply stated, a “one size fits all” approach does not work here in the Northwest Territories.

The Agreement-in-Principle for the Sahtu Dene and Métis of Norman Wells is a good example of our commitment to negotiating self-government agreements that reflect the unique realities of each community. The Agreement-in-Principle considers how to implement the inherent right for the Sahtu Dene and Métis of Norman Wells in a

community where they comprise a smaller proportion of the overall population. This Agreement-in-Principle is flexible and forward-looking, in that it allows for changes in the governance model, as the population demographics change in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that in the Northwest Territories we have a shared history of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people living, working and governing together. This is reflected in the fabric of our communities, in the languages we speak, and in the cultural and business decisions we make.

This milestone achievement is something that should be celebrated by all Northerners, not just residents of Norman Wells and the Sahtu region. That is because we know and believe that completed agreements are the basis for realizing our true social and economic potential by clarifying and providing certainty with respect to Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.

With one milestone reached, the parties are already looking ahead and have commenced negotiations on a final self-government agreement for the Sahtu Dene and Metis of Norman Wells. Completing these negotiations continues to be one of the most powerful and meaningful ways that we can demonstrate our commitment to reconciliation, and to empowering our people to be self-sufficient and self-determining.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the hard work by the negotiating teams who have helped get us to this important moment in history. Congratulations to all of the parties on this momentous achievement, and most importantly, congratulations to the Sahtu and Dene and Metis of Norman Wells.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.